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# Special Education in Cambridge Secondary Schools

*Current Practices and Recommendations for the Future*



Marilyn Friend, Ph.D.

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## Executive Summary

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The purpose of this report is to (a) summarize the findings of a snapshot of special education programs and services (with an emphasis on co-teaching and inclusive practices) at the four upper schools and Cambridge Rindge and Latin School (CRLS) in the Cambridge Public Schools and (b) make recommendations concerning how those programs and services could be refined in order to best reflect recent special education trends and expectations and thus potentially enrich outcomes for students with disabilities. Background data (e.g., website information, informal conversations) were gathered and formed the basis for designing the project. The following data were gathered primarily during March and May, 2014:

- A survey of staff members at all the schools, including general and special education teachers, administrators, related services professionals, and paraprofessionals
- Focus groups with a sample of individuals from each professional staff category
- Interviews with central office administrators and several site administrators
- Observations in a sample of classrooms implementing co-teaching
- Review of individualized education programs (IEPs) written for students with disabilities receiving services at one of the five schools

The data were analyzed separately by school level and also by data type. Results suggested that the upper schools and CRLS have both strengths and liabilities in the current special education structures and practices. For example, upper school teachers highly value co-teaching, defined as a general educator and a special educator working together all day, the practice currently in place for sixth grade math. Many concerns exist, though, related to addressing the behavioral/social/emotional needs of upper school students, including those with disabilities. At CRLS, a deep sense of pride exists for the diligent efforts that have resulted in the current co-teaching model. However, professionals are fearful that changes at the district and school level could have a negative impact on the present programs and services. Across all the schools, educators' dedication to their students was apparent, as was their commitment to seek additional strategies to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. Students' IEPs were detailed, but several questions were noted regarding eligibility categories, data in the present level of performance, and the manner in which goals are written, including goals related to students' transition from school to post-school options.

Several recommendations were made specifically for the upper schools or CRLS. The recommendations that follow are made for the district and include those made in the first report generated as part of this project (inclusive practices at Haggerty School).

## Recommendations from the Report on Haggerty School

1. *Design and implement a process for making inclusive practices an expectation in all Cambridge schools.*
2. *Systematically review potentially problematic special education policies and procedures to ensure they reflect contemporary expectations and best practice.*

## Recommendations based on the Upper Schools and CRLS Snapshots

1. *Clarify the district vision for what inclusiveness means for students with disabilities and their families, including the place of co-teaching in a continuum of service options.*
2. *Create a structure for ongoing, constructive stakeholder input on long-term goals and plans for special education in CPS.*
3. *Examine special education staffing patterns in order to create general guidelines for equitably deploying teachers, related services personnel, and other staff members.*
4. *Increase transparency in communication among special education service providers as well as between the Office of Student Services (OSS) and administrators and general education teachers and the OSS and other district departments.*
5. *Improve special education professionals' skills for preparing IEPs that are consonant with contemporary standards.*
6. *Create, implement, and evaluate, with colleagues in general education departments, a master plan for professional development related to students with disabilities, co-teaching, instructional strategies, behavior management, and related topics.*
7. *In the planning and implementation of co-teaching and other inclusive practices, measure decisions against a metric of sustainability.*
8. *Map out and communicate to all stakeholders a 3-5 year plan for facilitating the evolution of co-teaching, other inclusive practices, and related special education programs and services.*

## Conclusion

Inclusive practices have shifted over the past decades from a kind notion for enhancing social access for students with disabilities, with academics viewed as a bonus but not a necessity, to a professional imperative for ensuring that the students can reach their potential. The Cambridge Public Schools have in place many of the resources—personnel, financial, instructional, and other—to facilitate the growth of the next generation of inclusive practices. However, the fact that many resources are in place does not necessarily mean that this journey will be an easy

stroll down a carefree path. Instead, the work needed may be even more arduous and the path strewn with hidden perils just because so many resources are already in place, and questions are likely to arise concerning why change is necessary. The dedication of CPS professionals, their determination to continue to improve options for students with disabilities, and their insights into what is now working well and what needs change will be central for accomplishing the goal. Ultimately, students will not just benefit but thrive through these efforts.

# Special Education in Cambridge Secondary Schools

## *Current Practices and Recommendations for the Future*

The purposes of this report are to (a) summarize the findings of a snapshot of special education programs and services (with an emphasis on co-teaching and inclusive practices) at the four Cambridge Public Schools (CPS) upper schools (Cambridge Street Upper School, Putnam Avenue Upper School, Rindge Avenue Upper School, Vassal Lane Upper School) and the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School (CRLS) and (b) make recommendations concerning how those programs and services could be refined in order to best reflect recent special education trends and expectations and thus potentially enrich outcomes for students with disabilities. This report contains information gathered through phone and electronic communication as well as two two-day site visits in March and May 2014, one for the upper schools and one for CRLS. The report is supplemented by additional information sought informally prior to and after on-site data collection. In addition, it incorporates data from IEPs written for upper school and CRLS students. The snapshot is in large part informed by input from general and special education teachers, related services professionals, school administrators, and district administrators.

The report is arranged in the following sections:

- Project description, including the context for this project, guiding questions for the snapshot, and project goals
- The procedure followed for gathering data determined to be critical in creating the snapshot
- Presentation of the results of the data collection and a brief discussion of the findings, with separate sections for the upper schools, CRLS, and district administrators
- Recommendations about possible next steps for improving the educational outcomes for students with disabilities through program enhancements.

It should be noted that this report is the second of two. The first report reviewed special education programs and services, particularly co-teaching and inclusive practices, at Haggerty

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School. That effort informed much of the work completed for the current project, and the two reports are similar in terms of context, instrumentation, and procedures. Further, information gleaned from administrators as part of that initiative contribute to the district-level recommendations made at the conclusion of this document.

**Definitions.** As most professionals know, special education is a discipline replete with terms and acronyms that sometimes are used with precision and sometimes are mistakenly used interchangeably. For the purpose of this project, acronyms are explained as they are introduced, but it is important to provide a brief clarification on the meaning of the following key terms:

1. **Inclusion.** Inclusion is a belief system or philosophy that exists primarily at the school level (rather than at the student, teacher, or classroom level) expressing a commitment that all students, including those who have disabilities or other special needs, are welcomed members of the learning community and that their needs are proactively addressed so that they can reach their true potential (e.g., Causton & Theoharis, 2013). Inclusion is not a reference to the setting in which students are taught (i.e., only general education). Professionals in inclusive schools (the preferred term to describe this belief system) are strongly committed to educating students with disabilities (as well as all their other students) in general education settings, but they recognize that some students must receive some of their education outside those settings (e.g., Friend, 2013). When such a need exists, it is clearly documented with appropriate data, and data are gathered frequently during instruction in a separate setting to ensure that the interventions provided there are having the impact of accelerating the student's learning rate. The goal is to reduce or eliminate the need for separate service as quickly as possible. Inclusive schools do not use phrases such as these: *inclusion class*, *inclusion teacher*, *inclusion student*.
2. **Co-teaching.** Co-teaching refers to a contemporary special education service delivery option, not articulated in federal law and still considered to be emerging, in which general educators and special educators (or other specialists) contribute their unique expertise in a single classroom, for all or part of the school day, in order to accomplish dual purposes: (a) access to the general curriculum and its rigorous standards for all students, including those with disabilities; and (b) the embedded provision of special designed instruction (SDI) for students with disabilities based on their individualized education programs (IEPs) (e.g., Friend, 2014; Solis, Vaughn, Swanson, & McCulley, 2012).

**Limitations.** In considering the information contained in this report, readers should keep in mind that a number of limitations exist:

1. The data included in this document generally comprise a single point-in-time glimpse of the beliefs and practices at the CPS secondary schools during the spring of the 2013-2014 school year. As such, the data do not reflect trends or patterns prior to or after that time period.
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2. A snapshot such as this captures a great deal of information about a school's programs and services, but it is likely to miss nuances of school culture and traditions and to overlook some relevant dimensions of the school's formal and informal policies and procedures. This limitation is especially pertinent in view of the fact that the primary focus of this report is co-teaching and inclusive practices. Specific attention was not paid to other special education programs or procedures, although such services are mentioned when they were raised by participants or otherwise seem to influence current practices.
  3. Unknown factors may have contributed to the results obtained. For example, although the surveys were designed to be completed by all personnel, these data were gathered electronically, and individuals who were unable or unwilling to participate by using this technology were excluded. It is not known whether those responding are significantly different from those who chose not to respond, nor whether respondents' perceptions are somehow biased in a particular way. Similarly, it cannot be known whether the perspectives expressed by staff members participating in focus groups or interviews are an accurate representation of all staff members' views.
  4. Parent input was not sought as part of this project. Given limited time and other resources available, the decision was made that this project should focus on the perceptions of staff members and related documents and observations. Thus this report does not reflect potentially valuable input that might be obtained from parents.
  5. This review of special education services, especially co-teaching and other inclusive practices, did not attempt to document teachers' specific instructional strategies in general education or specialized settings, nor did it directly examine student outcomes at the classroom level. Such data might have provided additional detail that could have been informative in making recommendations, but collecting this information was deemed of lesser importance, at least for the purpose of this project, than examining broader matters. However, quality of instruction—specifically the use of evidence-based strategies—has been found to significantly affect student outcomes (e.g., Brownell, Smith, Crockett, & Griffin, 2012), and thus this topic at some point merits further consideration.
  6. As noted previously, this report is the second of two commissioned for the school district. The first report addressed inclusive practices and co-teaching at Haggerty School. Information gathered for that project in some instances was directly applicable to this project, and so it was incorporated into this report.
  7. Some of the data gathered as part of this project raise questions and concerns that go beyond the school level. These matters are called out as appropriate for district consideration as they are described.
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## Project Description

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In this section information is provided about the background for this project and the context in which it is situated. In addition, the questions guiding the work and the goals for it are outlined.

### Context for the Project

The Cambridge Public Schools have for many years adhered to dual goals: (a) provision of a rigorous education leading to academic excellence and (b) social justice, including respect for diversity and safe, healthy learning environments. The latter goal incorporates inclusive practices for educating students with disabilities so that the former goal can be a reality for them as well as for other students. These dual goals are reflected in some manner in individual schools' mission statements and descriptions of their educational options. For example, Cambridge Avenue Upper School's description of its priorities for students specifically mentions inclusiveness. Similarly, the CRLS mission statement mentions the school's commitment to a rigorous education for every student and its dedication to valuing diversity.

With academic rigor based in social justice and inclusiveness as defining priorities for CPS, it is important to periodically examine the status of the programs and services that contribute to ensuring those priorities remain contemporary, that is, that they evolve as the knowledge base for the field of education evolves and that they reflect in implementation the best of current evidence-based practices. Examples of recent changes that likely should affect the education of students with disabilities in CPS secondary schools include the following:

1. Nationally, expectations for students with disabilities have been raised significantly, and it now is expected that nearly all students with disabilities will reach the same rigorous standards as their peers (Friend & Bursuck, 2015; Hang & Rabren, 2009) or will meet aligned, functionally based versions of those standards. Thus, inclusiveness has evolved from its early focus on participation, sometimes primarily for social reasons, to a requirement for attaining academic outcomes. A clear federal priority at this time is to significantly reduce the achievement gap between typical students and those with disabilities (McLeskey & Waldron, 2011).
  2. The most recent MCAS data indicate that a significant gap continues to exist for achievement and other outcomes for students with disabilities in CPS when compared to those outcomes for other students in the district. And although nearly all professionals would note that reducing the achievement gap for this group of students is a daunting goal, the fact that more than 80 percent of students with disabilities have no intellectual disability (U.S. Department of Education, 2014) makes this educational target a particularly crucial one.
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3. The knowledge base and guidelines on co-teaching as a service delivery option for educating students with disabilities have grown significantly. Changes have included the importance of students being truly integrated into the culture and activities of the classroom rather than receiving significantly different instruction while seated in general education (e.g., Friend, 2013). Another change has been a rapidly increasing emphasis on the specific roles and responsibilities of each professional in co-taught classes (e.g., Eisenman, Pleet, Wandry, & McGinley, 2011; Walsh, 2012), including understanding of role reciprocity, that is, an emphasis on general educators participating in the delivery of specially designed instruction (SDI) and the special educator participating in the delivery of the curriculum. A third change has been a rapidly increasing expectation for highest quality instruction in co-taught classes and the effective delivery of SDI that is required for students with disabilities based on their IEPs (Friend, 2014; Silverman, Hazelwood, & Cronin, 2009).
  4. Changes in district leadership have resulted in a new lens that has provided an opportunity to take stock of current programs and services, benchmark them against contemporary understandings, and open conversations about next steps that build on the caring and resourceful foundation of current practices created by CPS professionals. The intent is not to discard all practices nor to imply that anything is specifically “wrong” in services for students with disabilities. Instead, the current snapshot represents an initiative to consider whether current understandings and practices should be updated and refined in order to be more efficient and effective.
  5. In the Cambridge Public Schools, the overall proportion of the student population identified as having disabilities is considerably higher than the Massachusetts or federal averages. Specifically, approximately 21 percent of CPS students are identified as disabled, as compared to 17 percent across Massachusetts (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2014) and 11-13 percent nationwide (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). These data suggest that it is particularly important that programs and services foster the best outcomes for this student group; it is likely that at least some of these students, if they were in another school district, would not be identified as having disabilities.

These factors, combined with larger national trends related to education priorities, student achievement, and teacher accountability, have contributed to the importance of reviewing special education programs and services. Questions have been raised concerning ways to refine the educational procedures and services in the upper schools and CRLS, to create with staff members a next-generation model of inclusive practices, and to ensure that all staff members universally understand and embrace such a model.

Based on the information just outlined as well as other general local factors beyond the scope of this project to directly address, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Victoria Greer contracted with Dr. Marilyn Friend to complete a snapshot of the current practices. The goal was established to make recommendations related to next steps for the secondary school professionals to consider

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and implement in collaboration with district leaders in order to enhance and take to the next level their work to successfully educate their students.

## Guiding Questions

The following questions guided this project:

1. *What is the current status of special education programs and services at the four upper schools and CRLS, especially those emphasizing co-teaching and other inclusive practices?*

This question implies that key stakeholders' perceptions of what inclusion is should be assessed. The question also suggests that careful examination should occur of current school practices and documentation related to those practices.

2. *What present inclusive programs, services, and practices are effective and efficient and should be preserved? What inclusive programs, services, and practices are ineffective or inefficient and should be discontinued, revised, replaced, or adjusted?*

This question indicates that input on the ideal should be obtained from informants. In addition, information from other studies of inclusion in urban school districts should be examined in order to formulate a response.

3. *What actions are recommended that build on the existing inclusive practices at the identified schools in order to grow to a next generation the programs and services currently implemented programs and services?*

This question represents the analysis of data gathered from the above questions. This question is the basis for making recommendations concerning refining inclusive practices at the upper schools and CRLS.

## Project Goals

Based on the context for this project and the questions posed for it, the goals of this project included these:

1. To gather, analyze, and present in an accurate but succinct way data comprising a snapshot of the current status of inclusive schooling and related practices at Cambridge Street Upper School (CSUS), Putnam Avenue Upper School (PAUS), Rindge Avenue Upper School (RAUS), Vassal Lane Upper School (VLUS), and Cambridge Rindge & Latin School (CRLS).
  2. To generate a set of recommendations that concerned CPS stakeholders may use to design and implement procedures, professional development, and other activities to
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update/clarify their understanding of inclusiveness; refine implementation of inclusive practices; and improve achievement and other outcomes for students, especially those who have disabilities.

3. To incorporate data from the identified schools in an examination of inclusive practices, co-teaching, and other special education services across the Cambridge Public Schools with the intent of identifying, at the district level, particularly effective practices and those for which change should be considered.

It is anticipated that the results of this initiative will lead to an enhancement of special education programs and services across CPS schools. Based on the data gathered, its interpretation, and the resulting recommendations, possible actions include (a) a decision to seek consultation at the district and/or site level regarding program revisions; (b) the provision of professional development for appropriate audiences on topics determined to be priorities; (c) the creation of needed documents to clarify policies and procedures; (d) implementation of specific identified evidence-based practices; (e) coaching and feedback for teachers and administrators; (f) systematic problem solving related to issues that arise; and (g) similar activities. The ultimate goal of the project is to assist CPS secondary school staff members to build their capacity to deliver, document, and sustain contemporary inclusive practices so as to improve academic and other outcomes for students with disabilities.

## Data Sources

In order to offer informed conclusions about the current status of inclusive and related practices at the upper schools and CRLS, data were gathered from the following sources:

### Background Information

- The websites of the upper schools and CRLS as well as that of the Cambridge Public Schools, including the most recent report on the district's performance on the MCAS
- Two informal telephone conversations with Dr. Victoria Greer, intended to provide an orientation to the school district as well as the local history of inclusive practices

### Primary Data

The data just outlined provided background information and helped to establish a context for the gathering of these primary data:

- A survey of staff members at the four upper schools and CRLS, including general and special education teachers, administrators, related services professionals, and paraprofessionals
  - Focus groups with a sample of individuals from each professional staff category
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- Interviews with the schools' administrators
  - Interviews with selected district administrators
  - Observations in classrooms implementing co-teaching as a strategy to educate students with disabilities
  - Review of a sample of individualized education programs (IEPs) written for students receiving special education services at the five identified schools

In addition to these data collected specifically for this report, the author's more than 30 years of experience in assisting districts in implementing inclusive practices, her ongoing review of professional literature related to this topic, and her extensive record of scholarship in the field of special education contributed to the instrumentation, procedures followed, interpretation of results, and recommendations made.

## Procedure

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This section of the report includes information related to the development of the project's instrumentation, protocols, and templates; the procedures followed in gathering data; and the strategies employed for data analysis.

### Development of Instrumentation

#### Survey

The following steps were taken in order to develop an appropriate survey designed to gauge staff members' perceptions related to the status of inclusive practices and co-teaching, including areas of strength, areas of need, and ideas for program revisions:

- Electronic, face-to-face, and telephone communications (noted earlier) were completed in order to orient Dr. Friend to the priorities for CPS related to inclusive and related practices.
  - Key documents, including district data regarding student outcomes, school and district websites, and other items were reviewed to further inform data needs for the project.
  - Dr. Friend reviewed recent relevant professional literature to glean topics that should be included in the planned survey instrument.
  - Existing surveys of inclusive practices that have been published in the professional literature or employed by Dr. Friend in past work with other school districts were reviewed.
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- Based on the just-articulated strategies, items that seemed relevant to the project at hand were compiled as a first draft of questions for the co-teaching and inclusive practices survey.
- Dr. Greer reviewed the draft and made recommendations regarding items to add, delete, and change. The survey was revised accordingly. Thus, the survey was first created for the project at Haggerty School. Small changes were made to make the survey appropriate for the upper schools and CRLS, and these were reviewed with Dr. Greer.
- Because of the limited population participating in the survey and the risk of individual identification, the only demographic item added to the survey queried role. At CRLS, respondents also were asked to indicate whether they were currently co-teaching.
- In the final version of the survey, 16 items were included (with one item for general comments), grouped into these topic areas: students, staff members, programs and services, and other supports and perceptions. The items were worded so that participants responded on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1=strongly agree, 5=strongly disagree with two items using reverse scaling). In addition, an option was added to each question for respondents to write additional comments as they wished. The resulting survey instruments (slightly different versions for the upper schools versus CRLS) are included in Appendix A.
- It was decided that the most efficient way to gather survey data would be electronically. The survey was loaded by a research assistant into *Qualtrics*, a well-known, user-friendly survey platform well-suited to the collection and simple analysis of data from this type of survey project.

### Protocol Development for Focus Group and Individual Interviews

The following steps were completed in order to develop a set of questions appropriate to the focus group sessions conducted with the upper school and CRLS teachers, specialists, administrators and other staff members, as well as the individual interviews conducted with district administrators.

- Dr. Friend reviewed current professional literature on the characteristics of well-designed focus groups and how to carry them out successfully.
  - Topics addressed were identified based on preliminary conversations with school and district administrators, literature related to inclusive practices, a review of website information about CPS schools, and consultant experience in conducting such focus groups with many professional role groups.
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- Questions were developed so that they would foster elaborated responses from participants and thus reveal rich and detailed information about inclusive special education programs and services, including co-teaching. However, the questions were designed to serve as a guide for the focus groups and interviews; no intent existed to ask each question in exactly the written format. In addition, prompts were added in case participant responses required clarification or elaboration.
- Dr. Friend created the final version of the focus group and interview questions. For this project, those versions were based on the same work completed for the Haggerty project; the resulting protocols were very similar to the ones developed for that effort. A copy of the focus group and interview protocols is included in Appendix B.

## Other Data Collection Tools

In addition to the survey instrument and focus group and interview protocols, the following items were utilized in gathering data for these school snapshots.

### Classroom Observation Protocol

To capture key dimensions of teachers and students in their classrooms, Dr. Friend used an observation template that had been developed for other projects. This protocol, created using the iPad application Note Master, was modified slightly to be appropriate for this project. It included options for recording data related to the classroom physical environment; the materials, equipment, and supplies being used; the implementation of co-teaching; general instructional plans and strategies that could be observed; classroom and behavior management; and an outline of the lesson observed. A copy of this template is included in Appendix C.

### IEP Summary Template

In order to discern patterns in the information contained in the IEPs reviewed for this project, a summary sheet was developed. This sheet was designed specifically for this initiative, and it included information spanning many components of the IEP, from the nature of the disability(ies) identified, to the present level of performance and other data, to the student's goals and objectives/benchmarks, to required accommodations/modifications and other supplementary aids and services, to transitions plans, to services (including amount of time, provider, and location, and related information). A copy of this template is included in Appendix D.

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## Data Collection and Analysis

The following procedures were employed to gather the data for this project.

### Survey

Special education teachers, general education teachers, site administrators, related service personnel, and paraprofessionals received an e-mail with an invitation to complete the electronic survey and were provided with the link for doing so (the link was arranged by Dr. Friend and distributed by Dr. Greer). The survey invitations coincided with Dr. Friend's visit to the schools, and so the invitation to upper school staff members was distributed on April 2, 2014 and the link for the CRLS survey was distributed on May 14, 2014. For each group, the survey was open for responses for approximately four weeks, with additional time allowed for the upper school survey because of spring break. A total of 118 individuals from the upper schools and 23 individuals from CRLS completed at least part of the survey, with multiple respondents from each of the identified staff member groups.

After the survey links were closed, the data from the quantitative items were aggregated and then analyzed so that trends in responses could be identified. Because of the nature of this project and the small sample size, for the first round of analysis Dr. Friend and her research assistant generated only basic descriptive data. For example, responses were not analyzed based on roles or other factors, nor were analyses run to compute statistically significant differences in responses between groups. These data are included in Appendix E. A second analysis did disaggregate the data by roles, and in the results section instances are noted in which clear differences were found. However, those data are not appended to this report in order to preserve confidentiality.

Qualitative responses from the surveys were aggregated and reviewed using accepted practices for the analysis of such data. Two analyses were completed, one for the upper schools and one for CRLS. Dr. Friend and her research assistant independently and repeatedly reviewed these data in order to identify common themes. They then analyzed each other's results, noting areas of consistency, areas of difference, and possible omissions. A single set of larger themes—communicating the deeper information sought in this type of project—was articulated based on this work, and these themes, illustrated with respondent quotations, are included in the results section of this report.

### Focus Groups and Interviews

Dr. Greer and representatives from the school sites managed the scheduling for the focus groups and interviews. They kept in mind the request to include a sample of individuals from each of the stake-holding groups at the school and representing a variety of perspectives. These data collection activities were completed for the upper schools on April 1 and 2, 2014 and for CRLS on May 13 and 14, 2014, during Dr. Friend's visits to the schools. For the upper schools, 3 focus

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groups and 1 interview were completed in the conference room in the offices of the Department of Student Services; one additional interview was completed at a school site. For CRLS, five focus groups and two interviews were conducted in the main office conference room. District administrators were interviewed during the upper school visit; these interviews were completed in the conference room in the offices of the Office of Student Services. All focus groups and interviews were based on the developed protocols, conducted in a comfortable and quiet setting, and audio-recorded using the iPad application called Super Note. Each interview or focus group lasted approximately between 45 minutes and one hour.

Focus group and interview data subsequently were downloaded and sent to a transcriptionist so that a print copy of the information participants shared could be produced. Dr. Friend and her research assistant applied a procedure similar to that used for the qualitative survey data to derive themes for this data set. In the results section of this report, these themes are outlined, with direct quotations illustrating them. Transcription are not appended out of concern for confidentiality.

### Classroom Observation Data

The schedule for classroom observations was arranged by school site representatives at Dr. Greer's request. Dr. Friend observed in a total of four upper school co-taught classes (all classes were sixth grade math) and seven CRLS co-taught classes (spanning grades 9-11 and all four core academic areas). Each observation lasted for approximately 50 minutes (the entire class period) at the upper schools and for approximately 30 minutes at CRLS. During each observation, Dr. Friend used the prepared template, recording information about the environment, teachers and students, co-teaching, and the overall instructional approach.

After the site visit, the observational data were exported to Word files. These data were then tabulated, and the resulting summaries were reviewed to identify patterns of classroom activities and other dimensions of the delivery of educational services to students with disabilities. A summary of key patterns identified through this analysis is found in the results section.

### Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)

Dr. Friend was provided with copies of IEPs (randomly selected by Dr. Greer's staff) for 16 upper school students and for 10 CRLS students. After the site visit, these IEPs were read multiple times to gain an impression of their contents. The IEP summary template was then completed for each of these documents, and the completed forms were further analyzed in order to make statements about the information they contained. Patterns in the preparation of IEPs were thus identified and are reported in the next section.

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## Results and Discussion

In this section, results of the data collection are presented. Data for the upper schools, CRLs, and the district administrators are presented in separate segments. Further, in order to enhance clarity concerning the source for the results being described, each of the four primary data sets for the schools—survey responses, focus groups and interviews, classroom observations, and IEP information—is presented separately.

### Upper School Results

#### Survey: Perceptions of Upper School Special Education Programs and Services

##### Demographic Information

The roles of the individuals responding to the survey are presented in Table 1. It should be noted that not every respondent completed each item in the survey. The number of responses for each item in the survey ranged from 95 to 104.

Table 1

<b>Role</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
General education teacher	54	46
Special education teacher	29	25
Paraprofessional	4	3
Related services professional	15	13
Other	16	14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>100</b>

##### Quantitative Data

Table 2 is a summary of the responses of all participants to the survey items, reported with means and standard deviations. The following items seem particularly relevant within the context of the overall responses or based on the responses of particular role groups:

Table 2

Item	$\bar{X}$ (SD)
<b>FOCUS ON STUDENTS</b>	
1. Special education programs/services at my school meet the academic needs of students with disabilities.	2.86 (.98)
2. Special education programs/services at my school meet the social/behavioral needs of students with disabilities.	2.58 (.99)
3. Special education programs/services at my school interfere with the academic achievement of students who do not have disabilities.*	2.05 (1.01)
4. Special education programs/services at my school interfere with the social/behavioral development of students who do not have disabilities.*	2.03 (.96)
<b>FOCUS ON STAFF MEMBERS</b>	
5. General educators at my school are satisfied with special education programs and services.	2.63 (.98)
6. Special educators at my school are satisfied with special education programs and services.	2.45 (.94)
7. Paraprofessionals at my school are satisfied with special education programs and services.	2.87 (.79)
8. Related services staff members at my school are satisfied with special education programs and services.	2.86 (.74)
<b>FOCUS ON PROGRAMS AND SERVICES</b>	
9. Co-teaching is effective in accomplishing the joint goals of curriculum access and the provision of special education services.	3.80 (1.08)
10. My school has options for intervening with at-risk students in order to prevent the need for special education.	2.69 (1.04)
11. We need to make changes in our programs and services to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.	4.28 (.84)

<b>FOCUS ON OTHER SUPPORTS AND PERCEPTIONS</b>	
12. My principal is supportive of special education programs and services at my school.	3.46 (1.03)
13. The district is supportive of special education programs and practices at my school.	3.15 (.93)
14. Parents are satisfied with special education services at my school.	3.07 (.75)
15. My school is characterized by a strong collaborative culture.	3.28 (.98)
16. What other comments would you like to make about the past, present, or future of special education, related services, and inclusive practices at your school?	NA

\*Denotes items for which a lower score indicates a more positive response.

- The item receiving the highest mean score across the four upper schools was Item 11, querying the need to make changes in programs and services to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. Responses to this item were extremely consistent across all of the respondent groups.
- The three other items that received a strong positive response were (a) the effectiveness of co-teaching (Item 9), (b) the extent to which principals are supportive of special education programs and services (Item 12), and the schools' culture of collaboration (Item 15).
- Among the items with the lowest ratings (with mean ratings considerably below neutral), two seem to be related. Specifically, general educators' satisfaction with special education programs and services (Item 5) and special educators' satisfaction with special education programs and services (Item 6) were moderately negative. These data comprise a source of validity with the item receiving the highest mean rating, that is, the need for change in special education programs and services.
- The two other items receiving responses indicating moderate overall disagreement were these: (a) the extent to which special education programs and services meet the social/behavioral needs of students with disabilities and (b) the availability of options for intervening with students at-risk in order to prevent the need for special education.

- Across all responses, related services professionals were the most positive, followed closely by the special education teachers. General educators tended to be the least positive. The paraprofessional and other staff groups tended to respond between the other professional groups and to be more varied in their responses. For example, the related services staff members were neutral (within .10 of a rating of 3) or positive on all the items on the survey. They comprised the group that disagreed most strongly with the items concerning inclusive practices interfering with the academic achievement (Item 3) and social/behavioral development (Item 4) of typical students. Special educators recorded responses that were moderately positive or higher on 10 of the 15 items; three of the items rated lower than that were approximately neutral. In contrast, general educators' responses were moderately negative for 11 of the 15 items. It should be noted that these results are consistent with other reported studies of educator's perceptions of inclusive practices.

### Qualitative Survey Data

Although the quantitative survey data offer a summary of individuals' perceptions of the status of inclusive practices and co-teaching in the upper schools, important details are not accessed through items that ask for a numerical rating. The intent of gathering anecdotal comments related to each of the survey items is to learn about the nuances and the reasoning behind the quantitative responses. The following themes are those most discussed by participants, but it should be noted that many comments were made related to every survey item, and several topics raised on a limited basis could not be included in this report. Several sample quotes (verbatim except for spelling corrections) are included related to each of the identified themes in order to illustrate the overall character of the responses.

#### *Services for students with disabilities are severely constrained by current staffing patterns*

Respondents expressed directly and repeatedly the perception that even though the quality of the special education professionals generally is high, staffing is inadequate to appropriately educate students with disabilities and those who have other challenges (e.g., behavior problems). This sentiment was noted for special education teachers, related services personnel (especially counselors), and paraprofessionals.

- *Special educators work extremely hard but are not able to meet students' needs because they have too many students on their caseloads and not enough time to work with students.*
- *Given the current staffing levels, I believe the programs are doing an outstanding job. However, I believe that ideally, the staffing levels would [need] to be roughly double what they currently are to provide sufficient support for all students to make tremendous progress.*
- *We have a high number of students with social-emotional needs. The counselor's*

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*job is to be the adjustment counselor/guidance counselor. This means that she is to be available to all 300 students, while seeing almost 40 students on the IEP caseload. This is almost an impossible job. It would be preferable to have a counselor for each grade...*

- *All our paras are assigned to special education. They are spread too thin and the same meeting-just-to-have-meetings phenomenon puts a time and structural barrier between them and the gen ed teachers.*

*The current service delivery structures for special education are occasionally effective, often incomplete or inadequate, and not carefully enough designed*

Respondents made many comments about the problems with current special education service structures. Among the problems noted most frequently were these: (a) the fact that students with disabilities are pulled from core academic classes to receive special education and related services (and many educators noted that are they expressly prohibited from pulling students “specials” or foreign language classes); (b) lack of in-class support in the academic content areas of science and social studies; (c) the availability of co-teaching (defined by respondents as a special educator spending the entire day and teaching every class with a general education partner) in only sixth grade math and the perceived need to offer this option at more grade levels and in more courses; (d) the shortcomings of what respondents called “push-in,” in which special educators go into English/language arts or other classes with the goal of working primarily with targeted students and without the expectation of partnering with one general educator for the whole day; and (e) the need for additional staffing in order to design more effective service delivery options. These quotes exemplify this topic:

- *The pull out/push in model does not make any sense. General educators never or rarely give special educators their lesson plans nor do they collaborate. When special educators push in they are often just another adult in the room listening to whole group instruction...*
  - *The special education model in our middle school seems like an afterthought. It is bad for students, teachers, and special educators. Students receive pullout instruction during their core academic classes. The students who have the most difficulty in school are constantly missing core classes to receive specialized instruction, but in the meantime they are falling further and further behind.*
  - *The current structure of math-only co-teaching at the middle schools serves students only during math and leaves desperately-in-need students in other subjects, particularly in science and social studies.*
  - *We need more support in all classes, not just math and science. I would love to see the co-taught model in the 7th and 8th grades!*
  - *We all feel ineffective with the current model.*
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*Options for addressing students' social, emotional, and behavioral needs are distressingly inadequate*

One of the strongest threads throughout the survey comments concerned the needs of students with disabilities with social/emotional/behavior needs, as well as the same needs of students not necessarily eligible for special education.

- *[We have a student who] was receiving help from all kinds of adults in 5th grade, none of them formally part of a plan [and the student did not have an IEP]. Again, in 6th grade, we have pulled together a large group of staff people to assist this student academically and behaviorally, but there is a missing link in terms of formalizing his need for help so that it continues from year to year.*
- *Changes need to be made to programs/services that reflect the academic, social and behavioral needs of upper school students (whose needs are different from elementary and high school kids).*
- *There are holes in the system. If there is a student with severe behavioral issues and severe learning needs, especially if this is an ELL, I am frequently told, no, that isn't a good placement for this student, no, that wouldn't be the placement for this student....I think there are many students who benefit from inclusion, and that should certainly be the goal, but I have found that the response to students with emotional/behavior challenges, in addition to the learning needs, has been sluggish and unhelpful.*

*Expectations often are not clear, and some messages concerning students' education sometimes appear contradictory*

Survey respondents noted that the various initiatives and expectations they are addressing sometimes are not clearly communicated, sometimes are inadequately implemented, and sometimes are contradictory.

- *I feel there is a lack of clarity with all of the practices/models within the district, at least in the middle schools. We are doing RTI, we have co-teaching only in 6th grade math, and now we are tracking 7th and 8th grade math into leveled classes. It seems like we are trying different things with competing visions.*
  - *The special education department has been in need of major overhaul of practice for years now. There has always been an air of cronyism, a general practice of delivering mixed messages, and then holding people responsible when they don't follow the right message. It has been maddening.*
  - *There needs to be a unified vision and collaborative support of the work happening across all contents and programs in our schools.*
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*Collaboration is a priority, but many barriers limit its potential*

Comments related to collaboration were written in response to many of the survey statements. Collectively, these statements indicate that collaboration is valued and that it is a priority, but that problems exist with collaboration as part of school culture. Not surprisingly, limited time available for co-planning and other collaborative activities is a major concern.

- *I believe we need to have scheduled collaboration time ... in order to be more successful in meeting our students' needs!*
- *I hear the frustration my colleagues express at the lack of clear structures and collaboration and communication; plus they seem overwhelmed by the demands of paperwork that eat at their ability and time to work directly with students.*
- *There seems to be a lack of clear expectations and support offered to the special education team in collaboration with the building teams or departmental teams to provide adequate support to the work that needs to be done. Often special educators are working in isolation and it is not clear to students and the general educator how their work in pull-out sessions is in support of their larger content area goals/learning objectives.*

*Professional development is a pressing need*

Respondents noted that a barrier to refining special education programs and services at the upper schools is a lack of professional knowledge and skills related to key topics. This theme seemed relevant to most of the role groups at the school, but especially for special educators, general educators, co-teachers, and paraprofessionals.

- *I am a [relatively] new teacher, and feel I have received very little guidance and almost no professional development from the district. Even in this review of co-teaching - until now no one from the district has come to watch myself and my co-teacher and give us constructive feedback on our work within this new program for the middle school. I am eager to learn and to better my practices, and I feel the special education department does not give us opportunities for this type of professional growth.*
- *I have been in this district [a long time], and I have been waiting for a systematic approach to professional development for general educators in the area of special needs and differentiated instruction.*

*Response to intervention (RTI) has value, but it is still a very new concept and implemented on a limited basis*

When asked about intervention options for students at risk, many respondents directly addressed response to intervention, even though that term was not used in the survey. The

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sentiment expressed is that RTI has potential, but that full implementation is still a work in progress.

- *SST and RTI pathways are largely undefined. Follow through from meeting leaders is slow/missing.*
- *We have begun to implement RtI, but need more support staff or a different schedule to allow for structured time to provide the needed supports for these students.*
- *We do have RTI and interventionists working with our students to help support students who struggle but do not need special education services. This year I have not seen significant student growth from those interventions - and students continue to be referred for services as if there were no interventions, or without waiting for results of those "tier 2" interventions. I think the intent is there for options that prevent referral for special education, but they are not being carried out effectively yet.*

*The transition from K-8 schools to upper schools still is not completely embraced*

The upper schools had existed for nearly two years at the time of the survey. However, a number of participants noted that the change to this school structure resulted in unintended negative consequences for teachers and students, and some expressed a wish to return to the previous model. It is perceived by some that the upper school model has negatively affected services for students with disabilities.

- *Everyone at the school is pressed beyond reasonable limits and a culture of collaboration cannot take root in such circumstances. Besides, the Upper Schools have been around for barely 2 years. How does culture come about in such a short time span?*
- *When the Upper Schools were created staff across the board was cut to the bone and beyond. Then every moment of the day was governed by some [administrative] ordered protocol or meeting... The Upper Schools ... have kids right now that have pretty severe trauma, and there are so many outbursts, behaviors and internal, going internal on themselves, and there's only so much I can do and respond...and how do I...respond to the behaviors, and I cannot even really get her counseling because she's not on an IEP. So how do you give the support she needs and the strategies she needs to be successful?*
- *In the current structure at my upper school, my students on IEPs are getting significantly less support than they had in the K-8 structure.*

*Many concerns exist regarding administration, across types and levels*

Respondents expressed many concerns related to administration. These addressed site

administrators, special education administrators at the district level, and general education district administrators. Concerns included lack of knowledge, lack of coordination among initiatives, failure to actively support special education programs and services, and problems in following through on various district enterprises.

- *Some special educators are dissatisfied with the support they receive, from both gen ed administrators and sped administrators, and they are disappointed in each other.*
- *Lack of support (advocacy)/understanding by administration further contributes to program/service inadequacies.*
- *I think we are going in the right direction with OSS by cleaning up past administration, but it will take an overhaul. Also, CPS needs to stop hopping from one unsuitable curriculum to the next...*
- *I don't think that my OSS "supervisor" has any clue what I do on a daily basis, yet they historically have completed my evaluations while my administration has a keen sense of what I do.*

## Focus Groups and Interviews: Conversations about Current Practices and Possibilities

Focus groups with co-teachers and focus groups or interviews with upper school administrators provided an additional dimension to the information gathered for this project. The professionals who offered their perspectives were extraordinarily professional in discussing a wide range of topics, and they seemed to respond based on careful reflection and analysis and a desire to contribute their views in order to help in the process of improving outcomes for students. The following is a summary of the data, including verbatim quotations illustrating the themes.

### We want co-teaching, not push-in

One especially helpful aspects of the focus groups and interviews was learning about the local definitions professionals have assigned to the current options available to students with disabilities, all of which contribute to the overall concept of inclusiveness. Three terms in particular were discussed: First, co-teaching was defined as the teaching arrangement in which a general educator and special educator teach together all day, sharing a schedule and all elements of planning and instruction. This definition is not one that is typical for the field. Instead co-teaching usually is defined as a partnership that may exist for a single class period, and this broader conceptualization is the one most widely applied in schools across the country.

Second, push-in was described as any in-class service that occurs other than co-teaching. That is, push-in was described by participants as possibly daily in-class services, but for only a single

class period. It was also noted that push-in services may occur occasionally, perhaps two or three times per week or 6-day cycle.

The third term that should be mentioned is case management. A conventional definition of this term (i.e., responsibility for students' IEPs) was offered, but the assignment of such responsibility was unexpected. Specifically, special educators co-teaching did not have case management responsibility unless the only need for a particular student was in the area of math, a relatively rare occurrence.

The following quotations illustrate these points:

- *I think they just work well together, and you walk in the room and you can't tell who the special educator is or the gen ed teacher. I think in our 7th grade and 8th grade level we also have a similar group of staff who do push in and pull out. We also have at the 8th grade level one special educator who has informally developed kind of a collaborative teaching model with the 8th grade English teacher.*
- *I think that Cambridge is able to say it's inclusive because the special ed students are in classrooms. And I don't know if I generally feel that there's an effort all the time to say, you're in the classroom and you're sitting in the back, and you have a special educator sitting with you instead of pull out or push out, and when we think about "Is there commitment to co-teaching? Is there commitment to inclusion? Is there commitment to saying students with different learning styles can learn in the same classroom? And it's our job to support them differently?" It looks different in different places. And I don't feel like coming into the district, you're doing inclusion, this is how you do it, this is why you are committed to it, this is why we're committed to it. We kind of do our own take on it.*
- *I don't case manage. The only way I case manage is if there is a student who only has math goals.*
- *If [students with disabilities] have some other academic goal--math, ELA--then someone else would case manage them.*

Special education is characterized by issues related to role clarity and unclear and possibly conflicting expectations

Participants repeatedly noted that, especially when compared to their experiences in other locales, role clarity issues and overall competing expectations related to special education in the Cambridge Public Schools are concerning and exist in several ways. For example, psychologists' roles in leading IEP team meetings (serving as the representative for the district) were described as placing them in the role of being like a special education director, detracting from the notion of team decision-making in instances in which some of them insisted on particular decisions or practices. Participants noted that special educators sometimes feel pressured to agree with such

decisions out of concern for repercussions if they do not. Another role mentioned related to clarity and the potential for conflicting expectations was the teacher-in-charge. This individual's responsibility for supervision of special education teachers was noted as placing administrators in an awkward position of not always being apprised of key matters related to their teachers and students.

Examples of statements related to role clarity issues and conflicting expectations include these:

- *The school psychologist... I remind her that I'm the principal. What she does, she intimidates special educators, and they get a sense that she can make or break them. I have a lot of new staff and they are young, energetic, and come in with a 21st century view of what inclusive ed looks like. And you've got these people saying we can't do that, we can't do that. And giving misinformation, or giving information that's based on some leader's or supervisor's perception of what should happen. Threatening people to the extent of telling them that if you don't do this then it won't look good for you later, and so on...*
- *There's the principal, there's a teacher in charge who comes in and facilitates meetings with the special ed staff. There's a similar person who is supposed to be in charge of the paras... And so, it's hard to make a decision, because if I say I want something like the co-teaching, all the people run to all the different various supervisors if they were for or against it and then I have to respond...*

### We know we have multiple needs related to professional development

Many statements were made concerning critical needs for professional development. Several topics were mentioned repeatedly, including information about co-teaching, understanding of the characteristics of students with disabilities, and instructional strategies for more effectively teaching students with disabilities or other special needs. Audiences mentioned included general and special education teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators. Teachers working in self-contained settings also were noted as in need of more contemporary skills for working with students in these classes.

- *So I feel like the gen educators need that [professional development] because they don't "get" kids with LD. I feel like the special educators need to work on the advocacy piece because for me, the feeling is--whether a building has like six of them...or whether a building has one, their primary job is to, they need to implement the IEPs but in order to do that they need to be the advocate who is willing to say, "No, you can't grade this kid that way." Or, "There's extra stuff w/ this child"...no one is doing that.*
- *Two things from my perspective [would improve special education programs and services]. One would be some purposeful and intentional PD on instructional practice*

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*for my self-contained teachers. Because I think my other spec ed staff gets it, they're fairly young, more recent programs...*

### We are ready for change

The professionals who contributed to the focus groups/interviews clearly indicated a readiness for change in order to better educate students with disabilities. Their comments included mention of organizational structure, professional role responsibilities, staffing patterns, and instructional practices. These comments are illustrative:

- *And we haven't closed this achievement gap and the kids who are going to the office are too many black boys in particular and we've got to figure out how to change that.*
- *I do think that our district leadership has hired [Dr. Greer] and she comes from a great background and she comes with a lot of energy and courage and vision, and they need to support that, and they need to know that, and I think they will because the fact that we sit here indicates that they were able to overcome resistance. To change. This is going to be big... there are people in my building, there are parents in my building who say "Bravo. I'm with her." And it's not about this person. It's about the hundreds of children who are not being served appropriately.*
- *I think there's a smorgasbord of opportunity and resource. That said I think things need to be somewhat reconfigured so that the resources that we have will match the outcomes. I think we have a great deal of resources but our outcomes don't show that, so some things can be lost in translation.*

### You have to understand the Cambridge culture

Perhaps the most complex and difficult-to-raise topic mentioned by participants was the importance of understanding the context and culture of Cambridge and its public schools, and the impact these have on priorities and services for students with disabilities. These statements provided glimpses into professionals' understanding of this culture:

- *I think the mentality here has been more of this: If you have a disability we're going to feel sorry for you and show you lots of love...But, and that's great, but it's not really reinforcing what happens next in the child's life and development.*
  - *When I first came, they didn't call us...people would call themselves and other people would call us tutors. Not a special educator, not a licensed professional person. The teacher or kids would say, "Oh you are my tutor. This is my tutor." I guess to them, they felt that took away the stigma.*
  - *A group of math teachers, two weeks ago, stood before the School Committee and said, "This is all well and good, you send out this great little tracking system for all these*
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*affluent and all these highly skilled children, okay, by the way, we've got a cohort, a significant percentage of our school population who are falling behind. We want the same supports, we want those extra classes, we want those extra teachers." Give us the resources to take care of the kids who are not able to take this math class at the high school.*

## Classroom Observations: Co-Teaching in Sixth Grade Math

Observing in classrooms provides a glimpse into the day-to-day lives of educators and their students. The following are items noted from the data gathered during observations of the four sixth-grade math classes identified as the only co-teaching occurring in the upper schools:

- In all of the observed classes, instruction was clearly organized and carefully prepared. Instructional objectives for the lesson were either written on the whiteboard or displayed on a projected slide. Teachers had necessary materials and other supplies ready for the students, and when the co-teachers were simultaneously presenting, specific workspaces for each group had been prepared.
  - In one classroom, three adults were present and each had an area for working with students. The teachers explained that the third individual was a paraprofessional who accompanied students with autism to the class; the paraprofessional taught a small group of students material that appeared to be similar to that being addressed by the co-teachers. It was explained that the students in that group were not necessarily those with autism; students were assigned to groups based on the instructional goals for the day and specific student needs.
  - Across the observed classrooms, students were seated in ways that fostered their interaction, either at tables with classmates or at desks arranged in groups of two or four.
  - Class sizes in general ranged from 18-24 students present (rosters were not reviewed to determine whether students were absent).
  - Related to co-teaching approaches, various configurations were observed. In one class, the primary approach was the general educator leading instruction while the special educator assisted individual students. In another class, parallel teaching (that is, simultaneous similar instruction) was the primary approach. In a third classroom, the special educator worked separately with a small group of students, called alternative teaching. In the fourth classroom, students rotated among four groups, with the general educator managing students at three of the centers while the special educator worked directly with small groups of students at the fourth.
  - Technology use was noted in the classrooms. Use of a Smartboard was common, and in one classroom students were using iPads and notebook computers.
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- Student attention, understanding, and behavior in the classrooms varied somewhat, both within classrooms and across schools/classrooms. Most students were on-task much or all of the time. However, the amount of off-task student behavior and misbehavior was noticeable, given the presence of two educators. Examples included only three or four students participating when a teacher asked the entire group to respond to a question; students walking around the classroom without an instructional purpose; students failing to open notebooks, write problems down, or otherwise participate in the instruction; and students actively engaging in off-task behavior (looking at non-instructional items, talking). In several instances, students were re-directed but continued the same inappropriate behavior.
  - Because co-teaching should include the delivery of specially designed instruction (SDI), evidence was sought that students' IEP goals were being addressed. The most common strategy seemed to be to offer students the choice of additional help or teacher guidance. In one instance, it appeared worked had been simplified for some students. However, in most classrooms the work for students was essentially the same. It is possible that SDI was embedded in the instructional delivery in a way that was not apparent to a one-time observer.

## IEPs: Documentation for Special Education Services

The starting point for appropriate services for students with disabilities is the IEP. IEPs were reviewed in order to provide an understanding of the priorities for students with disabilities, the procedures and conventions for outlining their needs and services, and a view of their educational goals. The detail in the IEPs comprised evidence that extensive time is spent developing each of these documents and that staff members take extraordinary care in considering the needs of students. However, examination of the sample of IEPs highlighted several patterns and raised a number of questions. The following are the most central findings related to these documents:

### Eligibility Categories

Of the 16 IEPs reviewed, eight noted that students were determined eligible in multiple categories. Although this option certainly exists within special education, to have half of a random sample of IEPs with this pattern was unexpected. It is unclear whether state or local formal or informal policy favors this strategy. A question posed is this: What purpose is served by frequently determining a student to be eligible in multiple categories? In many ways, this approach raises issues about creating complexities for goal writing, service delivery, and accountability.

Another item noted related to categories concerned health impairments. Seven of the IEPs reviewed included this eligibility category, whether alone or in combination with one or more other categories. In all but one case, it was specified that the eligibility concerned the student having an attentional disorder. As noted above, this pattern of eligibility was unexpected.

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## Present Level of Educational Performance (PLEP)

Two distinct patterns were noted regarding information about students' present levels of educational performance. Several of the IEPs reviewed were written as the culmination of the required 3-year re-evaluation process. These IEPs included specific data related to students' intellectual ability, achievement, and other skills, as would be expected; not all contained individual diagnostic information that might be helpful for prioritizing goals. A second pattern was noted for IEPs that were annual reviews. Most of these documents contained primarily anecdotal information, sometimes with comments that might be considered evaluative. Students were described as easy-going or confrontational, but in neither case were data provided as a basis for the statements. Particularly surprising was the absence of specific behavioral data for a student whose disability was specified as emotional. The standard for the field of education is that the PLEP should include data. General achievement data often are incorporated, but the goal of this section of the IEP is to establish the foundation and justification for the goals that are written, and so data specific to the student and gathered individually generally are needed. None of the IEPs reviewed met this requirement in all the areas in which goals were written and services were specified on the service delivery grid.

Another item noted about the PLEP section of the IEPs concerns the relationship between information contained there and the goals written for the student. In most cases, the goals written for the student coincided at least in a general way with the noted areas of concern and eligibility category. That is, students identified as emotionally impaired had goals related to identifying the impact of their behavior on outcomes or learning strategies to cope with stress. Students with learning disabilities had goals related to reading, writing and math. The concern exists in the basis for writing the goals. Without specific data that indicate the need and its intensity, it is difficult to determine the appropriateness of the IEP goals.

## Supplementary Aids and Services

The number of accommodations included on students' IEPs ranged from 5 (N=2) to 23 (N=1), with the large majority of the IEPs incorporating 11-15 accommodations. It was noted that some of the designated "accommodations" might be considered classroom strategies expected for any student and perhaps not necessary to list on an IEP. For example, emphasizing major points during instruction, without any particular other clarification, may not rise to the level of needing specification on an IEP.

## IEP Goals and Benchmarks/Objectives

The IEPs include a section in which goals are termed measurable, but the concept of measurable seems open to many interpretations. Examples of goals and concerns related to them include these:

- *Student will increase money management skills.*
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Because no baseline information was provided, it is unknown what particular skills would be prioritized and what would constitute an increase in those skills.

- *Student will make appropriate decisions on work completion 80% of the time.*

What is an appropriate decision on work completion? What is a measure that could be used to determine if such decisions had been made 80% of the time?

- *Student will improve receptive and expressive language skills to 85%.*

The skills, the conditions under which they should be used, and means for judging their use to be at 85% are lacking.

- *Student will apply organizational skills in all academic areas.*

What is the measurable goal; what are the skills to be applied? What constitutes the baseline against which progress will be measured? What is an acceptable level of use?

### Transition Goals

Mention should be made of transition goals. These were inconsistently included on students' IEPs. In four cases, students who were 13 years old had IEPs on which transition goals had been included, even though not required by federal law for that age group. However, another student age 15 years, did not have transition goals on the IEP. The specificity of these goals varied widely. One student's goals included the missive to take college preparatory courses in high school; another encouraged the student to find volunteer service projects.

### Service Delivery Grid

Students' IEPs generally reflect a significant number of direct and indirect services by several professionals, provided in multiple locations. In some cases, students receiving services in a setting other than a primarily separate setting had schedules that appeared to be fragmented. For example, academic services in the general education setting might occur for 45 minutes per 6-day cycle, but the student also would receive such services for three 45-minute sessions during the same cycle but in a separate setting.

When services are noted on the IEPs, providers are directly accountable for the delivery of those services. This point is raised regarding the fact that all 16 IEPs included one or more consultation sessions per week between special service providers and general education teachers. It is unclear whether these sessions occur, how they are documented, or what is accomplished through them.

A relationship did generally exist between the nature of the disability, the number of goals/objectives/benchmarks, and the amount of service to be provided. That is, students with

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disabilities such as significant autism had goals crossing several domains, including communication, and received services in a separate setting for the entire school day. What could not be determined in this review was whether, for students with autism, those with emotionally disabilities, or even those significant learning disabilities could be better served in a combination of separate and co-taught settings, or possibly a combination of pullout and meaningful participation in a general education setting without co-teaching.

### Extended School Year (ESY)

A total of four of the 16 IEPs reviewed included the provision of extended school year (ESY) services in one or more areas. Massachusetts law specifies that ESY is justified when a student has demonstrated significant regression during the summer or clearly is likely to experience such regression. However, the IEPs did not provide data to support the need for this service, one that in many locales tends to be reserved for students with very significant intellectual or behavior-related disabilities. It raises questions related to the decision-making process for ESY as well as the need for evidence related to its need and the impact of its provision.

### Other Items of Note Related to Upper School IEPs

Across all IEPs reviewed, several patterns were noted that merit mention:

- Variability is a word that characterizes the IEPs as a whole. Some IEPs included specific data; others did not. Some IEPs demonstrated a clear connection among PLEP, goals and benchmarks/objectives, and the services offered; others did not. Some IEPs included all information in a clear and concise form; others had potentially key bits of information missing or incomplete (for example, three IEPs did not specify the home language). Some IEPs made direct reference to current Massachusetts curricular goals; others made no reference to these standards.
- The IEPs seem to have quite a bit of redundancy, with information included in two or three places, sometimes verbatim. Part of this may be related to MA-required IEP verbiage, but this might be an area to explore in terms of streamlining their preparation.

### Summary of Upper School Data

If a single phrase had to be applied to describe special education programs and services in the upper schools it would be “in transition.” In all the categories of data gathered, respondents indicated that a variety of issues and structures should be changed. Some of the views seemed based in part on comparisons with the previous K-8 school structure, others seemed based on experiences in other school districts or schools, and yet others seemed based on day-to-day instruction and interactions and students and other professionals. It was clear in reviewing all the data that a strong and caring concern exists for students with disabilities. It was also apparent that the co-teaching model in place for sixth-grade math was considered an exemplary

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practice, even though it is not entirely clear how that grade level and that subject matter was determined to be the highest priority for in-class services. Many of the statements made reflected a passion to ensure services were the best they could be, and many participants expressed concern that, in the current system, inequities exist for students with disabilities or other special needs.

## Cambridge Rindge & Latin School Results

### Survey: Perceptions of CRLS Special Education Programs and Services

#### Demographic Information

The roles of the individuals responding to the survey are presented in Table 3. It should be noted that not every respondent completed each item in the survey. The number of responses for each item in the survey ranged from 19 to 22.

Table 3

<b>Role</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
General education teacher	7	30
Special education teacher	10	43
Paraprofessional	0	0
Related services professional	2	9
Administrator	2	9
Other	2	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100</b>

Of those responding to the survey, 11 indicated that they co-teach, 10 indicated that they do not co-teach, and one respondent indicated it was not applicable to his/her role.

#### Quantitative Data

Table 4 is a summary of the responses of all participants to the survey items, reported with means and standard deviations. The following items seem particularly relevant within the

context of the overall responses or based on the responses of particular role groups:

Table 4

Item	$\bar{X}$ (SD)
<b>FOCUS ON STUDENTS</b>	
1. Special education programs/services at CRLS meet the academic needs of students with disabilities.	4.05 (.60)
2. Special education programs/services at CRLS meet the social/behavioral needs of students with disabilities.	3.80 (.77)
3. Special education programs/services at CRLS interfere with the academic achievement of students who do not have disabilities.*	1.90 (1.02)
4. Special education programs/services at CRLS interfere with the social/behavioral development of students who do not have disabilities.*	1.90 (.79)
<b>FOCUS ON STAFF MEMBERS</b>	
5. General educators at CRLS are satisfied with special education programs and services.	3.60 (.68)
6. Special educators at CRLS are satisfied with special education programs and services.	2.45 (.94)
7. Paraprofessionals at CRLS are satisfied with special education programs and services.	3.50 (.69)
8. Related services staff members at CRLS are satisfied with special education programs and services.	3.40 (.75)
<b>FOCUS ON PROGRAMS AND SERVICES</b>	
9. Co-teaching is effective in accomplishing the joint goals of curriculum access and the provision of special education services.	4.05 (.97)
10. RTI is functioning in a way that provides intensive intervention to possibly prevent the needs for special education services.	3.05 (.71)

11. We need to make changes in our programs and services to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.	3.84 (.37)
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<b>FOCUS ON OTHER SUPPORTS AND PERCEPTIONS</b>	
12. My principal is supportive of special education programs and services at CRLS.	2.63 (.90)
13. The district is supportive of special education programs and practices at CRLS.	3.53 (.70)
14. Parents are satisfied with special education services at CRLS.	3.58 (.61)
15. CRLS is characterized by a strong collaborative culture.	3.32 (1.00)
16. What other comments would you like to make about the past, present, or future of special education, related services, and inclusive practices at CRLS?	NA

\*Denotes items for which a lower score indicates a more positive response.

- Two items received the highest mean score: Item 1, the extent to which CRLS programs and services meet the academic needs of students with disabilities, and Item 9, the effectiveness of co-teaching.
- Other items that received noticeably high ratings were Items 3 and 4, those concerning the potential negative impact of special education programs and services on typical students; respondents' ratings indicate that they somewhat disagreed with these statements.
- One item was rated considerably lower than any other: Item 12, concerning principal support for special education programs and services. This was the only item (when scaling was reversed on the two items worded negatively) that fell into the moderately negative range.
- Although more positive than neutral, the next two items receiving relatively low ratings were Item 10, concerning intervention options available for students at-risk, and Item 15, concerning collaborative culture.
- Because of the limited number of respondents, only the general education teacher and special education teacher groups could be considered in examining role-specific ratings (that is, other groups had too few members). For 13 of the 15 rating items,

special educators were not as positive as their general education colleagues; for one additional item the ratings were the same. It should be noted that this result is not consistent with other reported studies of educator's perceptions of inclusive practices. It also should be recognized that with the one exception noted above, all the teachers' responses were in the neutral to strongly positive range.

### Qualitative Survey Data

It is relevant to note that the CRLS survey was disseminated at the time of the site visit, as had been done for Haggerty School and the upper schools. However, this coincided with mandated high stakes testing for some subjects and grade levels, as well as the end of a grading period. These factors may have negatively affected the response rate to the survey as well as the number of comments that were written about each of the 15 items, especially when compared to the response rate and quantity of written comments contributed by other respondents. The following are several themes—with illustrative quotations—that could be identified from the comments (verbatim except for spelling corrections). Caution is warranted, however, because the perceptions represent a small proportion of all the CRLS staff members.

*Services for students with disabilities have evolved and are effective; problems that occur are beyond the control of professionals*

Respondents described pride in the evolution of special education services for students at CRLS and expressed the notion that many changes have occurred in order to refine support and improve effectiveness. Issues noted tended to pertain to student motivation, scheduling of courses and options available to support students, and parent decision-making.

- *When the student is willing to accept the help of the teacher, the needs are met. Many students I have worked with this past year will get their accommodations/modifications but choose not to access them or the help of either teacher in the classroom. What are OSS staff supposed to do then?*
- *Special ed is the strongest single department in the school because it unifies so many different disciplines with a shared vision of teaching and learning for all students.*
- *I do believe that reading intervention in the upper schools and grades 9-10 is essential for growth of students with disabilities in Cambridge. I do not believe that a resource room model works best for all students, but some may benefit from having that structure built into their day, if there were no more than 6 students in a support class with one teacher.*
- *Overall, we have a great special education program and meet the needs of many students. However, I think we need to be able to have the flexibility to meet the needs of ALL students...for example, students with emotional issues [who are] too high functioning for the self-contained classes.*

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*Responses to CRLS and district leadership range from strongly positive to strongly negative*

Respondents made many comments about the CRLS principal, deans, and teacher-in-charge. Interestingly, these comments tended to be worded rather strongly and to suggest that polarized points of view exist at the school concerning leadership. These quotes demonstrate this topic:

- *I worry that our administrative team (principal, asst. principal, deans) is not knowledgeable enough about special education laws and policies and therefore does not always operate in the best interests of special education students.*
- *[Our principal] may be supportive but his absence is felt more clearly than his presence.*
- *The "whatever it takes" mantra developed and administered by the teacher-in-charge has led many SPED staff to pass students with disabilities, even if they did not earn a passing grade, due to fear of being penalized and placed under scrutiny by the teacher-in-charge.*
- *The district is at odds and often battling each other when it comes to general versus special education.*

*Relationships among staff members and between staff members and leaders vary in terms of respect, parity, and communication*

Several of the survey items prompted respondents to address the working relationships among staff members as well as the overall climate of CRLS as it pertains to students with disabilities. The comments made suggest that some working relationships are strong and positive, but that problems may exist related to the broader notion of a collaborative school culture, generally considered a requirement for the effective education of students with disabilities.

- *Some think we have an "easy" job. Some do not want the special educator to provide direct instruction to the whole class, some teachers do not agree with our philosophy of education, some teachers accuse us of dumbing down the curriculum. Some think we enable students with disabilities to be helpless learners. Thankfully teachers who don't want to co-teach don't have to except in rare occasions.*
  - *Many general ed staff look at OSS teachers as paraprofessionals and don't take us seriously.*
  - *[Collaborative culture exists] in some departments and parts of departments, but there are no school wide goals or practices around which the school as a whole collaborates.*
  - *[Collaborative culture exists] in pockets and in small voluntary groups, yes. Collectively, no.*
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- *There is a lack of civility within the CRLS environment. There is also a bullying type of leadership...*

*Service delivery options and the structures for them could be improved*

One additional topic was mentioned across multiple survey items. The nature of the service options, including those that are effective and those that are missing but needed, comprised a theme for this data set.

- *There are some students who need pull out services but because of block scheduling it is hard to provide. These students usually have executive functioning issues and may not be in classes that have a special educator.*
- *Some students will not take a [college prep] level class because they don't want to be with "those kind of students." Some students who had recommended services in a co-taught class will instead enroll on an honors level class to avoid being with students who may have behavior problems or are not motivated to learn.*
- *I believe that high school special education teachers feel that they are asked to attend far too many meetings and, as a result, are pulled from the classroom and co-teaching situations frequently. Planning for classes (or lack thereof) is also affected dramatically.*
- *I do think that having a resource room for some students may be beneficial to the school. I also feel that there should be a specialized reading program for students on IEPS.*
- *We are finding that a lot of students are struggling in their academic areas due to lacking basic fundamental skills. When they reach the high school, it is so difficult to teach those skills and the new curriculum. More and more students are moving into the self-contained classes (by parent request many times) which is increasing the numbers to 10+ students. Many of those students are not doing well in the co-taught classes because of behavior, attention, or emotional needs as well, but then academically are too high for the self-contained classes.*

## Focus Groups and Interviews: Conversations about Current Practices and Possibilities

Focus groups with co-teachers and focus groups or interviews with CRLS administrators provided additional detail about the inclusive programs and services for students with disabilities. The educators who offered their perspectives were extraordinarily professional in discussing a wide range of topics, and they seemed eager to provide input, even though it was a fairly stressful time of the school year. The overall tone across the conversations was a constructive one; participants noted successes, raised issues, and proposed solutions. The

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following is a summary of the data, including verbatim quotations illustrating the themes.

### We really like co-teaching...under appropriate conditions

The professionals participating in focus groups or interviews spoke extensively about co-teaching. Generally, they expressed their belief that, implemented appropriately, it was helpful for students, good for teachers, and a sustainable option for educating students with disabilities. A companion to the positive comments, however, was a series of stipulations related to the conditions under which the positive outcomes of co-teaching are likely to be realized. Without comment on the wisdom of any of the stipulations, the list included these items:

- General education teachers preferably should work with just one special educator per semester, not two or more.
- Special educators should teach in one department/subject area rather than two or more
- Special educators should be very knowledgeable about the content area in which they co-teach, preferably with a credential in that subject area
- Individuals should volunteer to co-teach, and professionals should have the option of picking their teaching partner; the quality of the relationship between the teachers defines the quality of the instruction in the co-taught class
- Unless a serious problem occurs, partnerships should be kept intact for as many years as possible.
- New co-teachers should receive an appropriate orientation to this service delivery option and professional development on its implementation to increase the likelihood of success.
- Co-taught instruction should be deliberate in order to reach high standards, and so common planning time is essential.
- The students in a co-taught class should be diverse so that the classes avoid the stigma of being considered “watered down” curriculum or the place students with behavior problems are assigned.

The following are quotations that illustrate many of the points made during the discussions of co-teaching:

- *I love co-teaching, I love just having the two people in the room because often in the classes that include such a range of kids they can be very needy so just the simple fact of having two people who can address issues as they arise... and it just offers more possibilities and so if we're doing an exercise that I want to differentiate more we can split the kids up more.*
- *I think what works about it with my co-teacher and me is the relationship that we have formed with trust. I think as I watch co-teaching pairs throughout the school that work and don't work, you see that it really comes from a place of being open and honest and sitting down from the start and the first year was really hard, because we would plan every minute from like who is going to say what today, and all of that, but it really*

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*built this wonderful thing and now I totally trust her and I think it's very mutual.*

- *Well it's like a marriage, but nurturing that relationship, that partnership takes a lot of time and effort. We have some partnerships where the click is natural, they're on the same page, and folks are really working well. And you see I think a corollary benefit to what happens in classes with kids. And then you see folks who are put together haphazardly because of necessity, we have kids that need this block during this time and when you have a class at this time so we have to combine two folks who didn't go into the partnership willingly who don't know as much about each other's practice, maybe philosophically on different sides of the table, and those things don't work so well.*
- *I feel like I'm being a better teacher for being with someone who thinks at such a high level mathematically. I look at where it falls apart. She looks at how fabulous math is, and I think together we've found a really happy place and she'll often say I never thought of it that way and I'll say I wish I could do that. And so I think the kids benefit tremendously. We discuss co-teaching--what we say about it is this: It would be easier to teach it by yourself, but it's so much better for the kids that we do it together.*

### Special educators make specific contributions in a co-taught class

With lively discussions about co-teaching occurring, participants were asked to identify the contributions made by special educators in co-taught classes. Responses included general assistance, ideas for differentiation, implementation of students' accommodations, and use of specific strategies. Also discussed were the opportunities co-teaching creates for one teacher to pull struggling students to the side of the class for additional instruction. It should be mentioned that some concern was expressed that the least likely offered service in a co-taught class is specially designed instruction, the instruction mandated by federal law for students with disabilities.

- *If I'm giving them a more difficult reading, she might take a group of kids, or help specific kids knowing what their needs are. Knowing this is our vocabulary. I have a lot of ELL kids too so, she's not an ELL teacher, but she still knows the reading components and she may need to help those kids. She might go over highlights on words. Tell them to focus on specific parts of the reading. She knows specific parts of the reading that are going to be more difficult for some of them. And certain vocabulary words that she may have to break down and explain more to them. Things like that in terms of reading. Helping with writing, in terms of using a graphic organizer and explaining to them...these are the parts of the essay or the writing piece that you need to work on. And then, showing them how to use a graphic organizer...*
  - *What's happening with our post-secondary failure is that kids leave, getting enough and getting by enough to pass the MCAS and pass high school, but we're not*
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*remediating their actual skills that they need when they leave high school. And we're doing so much work trying to tier the levels of our content in the classroom that sometimes the kids that don't come in with the skills needed to access that content don't actually get to work on their skills.*

- *I think co-teaching is a lot of good teaching strategies. I don't think there is a lot of specialized instruction.*

### Logistics are complex and in a state of flux

CRLS professionals spent a considerable amount of time explaining the various options students have in terms of courses, the impact of making one course selection on other options, and distinguishing how the academic departments had several models for course levels. Levels and types of classes were part of these conversations (i.e., college prep, honors, embedded honors, advanced placement; the RSTA program). These complexities were juxtaposed with decisions that families have to make regarding high school special education services and course options as well as the scheduling issues that arise related to special educators' roles and responsibilities.

Examples of statements related to logistics include these:

- *RSTA is an elective [for ninth graders]. It's only period 2 first semester...The problem is ...if you are a kid that has some executive functioning, or attention deficit, or has a hard time transitioning, or with changes, or any behavior issues, changing classes every seven days to different teachers, to different things, is a very difficult thing to do. I always make sure my inclusion person ...is available period 2, and that we really look at how we group some of our most needy kids together. Because we have basic skills kids in there. We have functional skills in there, we have academic kids in there. And the problem, everybody recommends every kid on an IEP to take RSTA. Because it's hands on and it will give them something to do.*
  - *Families are often signed off an IEP in 8th grade, mostly my students, because they want to sign up for honors level classes and there's this myth, but also true, that if they're going to get services they can't be in honors level classes because co-taughts are year-long.*
  - *It's different in every department... So the class you observed yesterday... is a co-taught class, but it also had honors students in it. It's truly a heterogeneous mix, but some kids can be getting an honors version, meaning alternative assignments...So they have a lot of alternative assignments and more rigorous requirements on some of their projects. So and we've been doing that pretty successfully for over 10 years. And we sort of pushed back against leveling [separate honors classes] when it happened. Now the pendulum is sort of swinging the other way and there are other departments considering embedded honors.*
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- *I think there's an additional challenge, too. When you have a co-taught class, I think sometimes they think that's where we should put every kid who struggles, so it makes that responsibility greater, so you might have six kids with IEPs and then you have five other kids who are really kids at risk who need some other kind of programming, but the best spot is with us and then you have 26 kids, the majority of whom struggle...*

### We're concerned about the future

Conversations about the current programs and service for students with disabilities at CRLS were seasoned with statements expressing concern about the future, especially from the teachers. Uncertainty about the appropriateness of changes that had already occurred, concern that additional changes would undo all the efforts to nurture co-teaching, frustration over leadership understanding of the nuances of instructional practices in a large high school, and disappointment related to teacher participation in decision-making were among the topics that comprise this theme.

- *I think overall we've seen improvement over the past five years in our population of OSS students. Based on MCAS results, and that's one measure. And also changes in the curriculum, too. And more meeting time between the content area and the cohort of co-teachers. That's a large group discussing year-long plans for example, so I think overall we've seen some improvement...but there is a gap. Clearly.*
- *But going into next year, again, taking out the human factor, taking out the fact that teachers need professional development, taking out the fact that co-teaching is a skill, it's a pedagogy that you need to learn, not just the equation of two teachers.*
- *It's like, it's working. Things are working because we have a system. Don't take away our resources because we're doing well. That's sort of the message... The last straw was special ed because that was... I came here, we made improvements every year and I don't want to get into a place that's not moving forward. So I'm hoping that this will be rectified... I'm worried about where we are going with this. And that they haven't studied the things that work or talked to people about it until now.*
- *We don't have a vision or mission statement currently in our building, haven't had the entire year. We don't have an instructional leadership team that understands special ed, inclusion, special ed services, how you implement them within the general ed curriculum, and I think that is killing us.*

### Classroom Observations: Co-Teaching Across the Core Curriculum

Because of the time of the year (end of a grading period) and other school events (mandated high stakes testing), teachers were concerned that classroom observations might not reflect typical practices. Their concern is acknowledged, but given the purpose of this snapshot, the visits occurred as one type of data out of many intended to inform this report. In fact, the

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activities in the co-taught classes did not appear to be so unusual that their validity as a sample of daily practice should be questioned.

The following trends were noted in the co-taught classes observed:

- In all of the observed classes, instruction was clearly organized and carefully prepared. Instructional objectives for the lesson were either written on the whiteboard or displayed on a projected slide in five of the seven observed classes. In addition, teachers had necessary materials and other supplies ready for the students.
  - Students were seated in a variety of ways, including rows with aisles, a double-U configuration, and in small groups. It appeared that classroom seating arrangements were relatively permanent. That is, in no class were students directed to move their desks in order to facilitate group or other instructional strategies.
  - Class sizes in general ranged from 11-20 students present (rosters were not reviewed to determine whether students were absent).
  - Various types of technology were integrated into the co-taught classes. In one room, students used calculators, in another computers and iPads were part of the instruction, and in yet another an instructional video was shown. In addition, interactive whiteboards were in frequent use, and a document camera was employed in one classroom.
  - Several co-teaching approaches were observed. Three classes used teaming, in which the two teachers functioned interchangeably and shared approximately equal instructional responsibility. In three other classes, the approach was one teach, one assist, in which one teacher led the instruction while the other quietly circulated through the class. It should be noted that the special educator was most likely to be in the latter role, even if that person had led the day's warm-up activity. In one class, a parallel teaching model was observed, with students divided between the two teachers. Overall, it was noted in five of the seven classes that the general education teacher clearly functioned in a lead role.
  - In all the classes observed, the teachers seemed relatively fluid in taking on various classroom roles. That is, in some cases the special educator would lead whole-group instruction while the general educator assisted a struggling student; in other cases the roles were reversed.
  - Because co-teaching should include the delivery of specially designed instruction (SDI), evidence was sought that students' IEP goals were being addressed. One possible example of this occurred when the special educator pulled a student to the back of the classroom during the warm-up activity, providing one-to-one instruction. The other observation was that the special educators tended to check with individual students, assisting them with a problem or activity, or answering a question. The
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most common arrangement, though, appeared to be all students completing the same work in essentially the same manner.

## IEPs: Documentation for Special Education Services

IEP are important documents for high school students with disabilities, forming a sort of road map for the completion of educational goals, guiding the student toward graduation, and facilitating the student's transition from the world of school to the world of post-secondary education or employment. The IEPs for this project were reviewed to gain a sense of how these general intents are addressed as well as the procedures and conventions for outlining students' needs and services and a perspective on educational goals. The amount of information contained in IEPs demonstrates that considerable time and effort are necessary for their development. The following patterns were noted from the set of IEPs reviewed:

### Eligibility Categories

Of the 10 IEPs reviewed, five noted that students were determined eligible in two categories, with the most common pattern being a designation of a health impairment (for ADHD) along with another disability category. As noted in reviewing the upper school IEPs, although this option certainly exists within special education, to have half of a random sample of IEPs with this pattern was unexpected. It is unclear whether state or local formal or informal policy favors this strategy. A question posed is this: What purpose is served by frequently determining a student to be eligible in two categories? This practice potentially creates complexities for goal writing, service delivery, and accountability.

It should also be mentioned that six of the 10 IEPs reviewed were for re-evaluations. An additional IEP was developed as part of an initial evaluation for eligibility determination. Only three of the IEPs were for annual reviews.

### Present Level of Educational Performance (PLEP)

Because so many of the reviewed IEPs were part of the re-evaluation process, what was noted in the section for the present level of performance may not be typical of the information included for annual reviews. One pattern identified was this: Even though the students ranged in age from 16 to 19 years, most appeared to have been administered a significant battery of individual formal assessments, including an assessment of intellectual ability. It is unclear why this practice would be in place unless it is required because of state regulation. Federal law permits the team to skip such assessments if they would not contribute new information or significantly inform the IEP development process. A second pattern concerned the IEPs written as annual reviews: Few specific data directly addressing the areas of disability were noted. Third, although many students were noted as having attentional problems, scant data were provided to support those assertions. Finally, the most common type of information included in this IEP section was anecdotal, concerning, for example, work habits, personal characteristics, general academic functioning, and parent concerns.

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Another item noted about the PLEP section of the IEPs concerns the relationship between information contained there and the goals written for the student. In some cases, the goals written for the student coincided at least in a general way with the noted areas of concern and eligibility category. However, in others this connection was tenuous or non-existent. For example, one student identified as having an emotional impairment had no goals or services related to this identified disability. Another was noted as having ADHD, but no related data were provided and no goals addressed an aspect of executive function. Overall, it was difficult to make judgments about the appropriateness of services because of such factors.

### Supplementary Aids and Services

The number of accommodations included on students' IEPs ranged from 5 (N=4) to 11 (N=3), a range that falls within expectations. It was noted that many of the accommodations were the same across students, including breaks during testing, extended time for testing, and clearly articulated directions.

### IEP Goals and Benchmarks/Objectives

The IEPs include a section in which goals are termed measurable, but the concept of measurable seems open to many interpretations. Examples of goals and concerns related to them include these:

- *Student will apply organizational skills in all academic areas with 80% accuracy.*

Because no baseline information was provided and the skills are not identified, it would not be possible to determine whether the student applied such skills across academic areas and with the expected accuracy.

- *Student will increase self-assessment skills and academic self-esteem as evidenced by developing one plan to address each academic issue in 4 out of 5 instances.*

What are self-assessment skills? How will it be determined that the appropriate student action has occurred in 4 out of 5 instances?

- *Student will demonstrate improved understanding and collection of information through selected reading materials and text and organization and quality of written expression as evidenced by standardized tests, content area assessments, and formal and/or informal written assessments with 75% accuracy and independence.*

Generally, so many different goals and measures of their attainment are included that determining whether the overall goal has been met would be challenging.

Overall, IEP goals were detailed and spanned the academic and behavioral domains, with other goal areas added as appropriate (e.g., occupational therapy). At question is whether they reflect



contemporary expectations for the preparation of these documents. It also should be added that the consistency in how the goals were written probably reflects the fact that special educators with this responsibility have been given specific directions on expectations for writing them.

### Transition Goals

Mention should be made of transition goals. Every IEP appropriately had information written for this section of the IEP. However, the extent to which the transition goals would clearly contribute to preparing students with disabilities for post-school options is unclear. The goals tended to be broad and often were worded as suggestions rather than specific targets whose achievement would be monitored. These are examples of transition goals:

- *Student is encouraged to sign up for the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program for the summer between her junior and senior years at CRLS...Student should meet with her counselor and other school staff to discuss possible post-secondary training options including certificate programs and associate degree work. (student age 18)*
- *Student could seek work study, internship, or job shadowing opportunities to explore career options in the ...fields she is interested in pursuing. (student age 17)*
- *Student is encouraged to take courses to improve upon his reading, writing, and organization... (student age 16)*

### Service Delivery Grid

Students' IEPs generally reflect a significant number of direct and indirect services delivered by several professionals, provided in multiple locations. For example, when services are noted on the IEPs, providers are directly accountable for the delivery of those services. This point is raised regarding the fact that all 10 IEPs included one or more consultation sessions per week between special service providers and general education teachers or others. It is unclear whether these sessions occur, how they are documented, or what is accomplished through them.

A relationship did generally exist between the nature of the disability, the number of goals/objectives/benchmarks, and the amount of service to be provided. That is, students with learning disabilities usually had goals related to reading, writing, math, and/or communication. What was not found in the set of IEPs were service options that existed between co-teaching, separate core curricular instruction, and separate setting for most of the school day. That is, none of the IEPs indicated that students had a supplemental resource class that focused on learning strategies or study skills or that they received special education instruction through a diagnostically developed reading program. The absence of such options may be the result of reviewing a small sample of IEPs, but given that most of the students had learning disabilities, the option noted or similar ones would be expected as a service for at least some of them.

## Extended School Year (ESY)

ESY was noted on just one of the 10 IEPs. It was seemingly appropriately designated for a student with a significant intellectual disability, a practice that is expected. However, the service was to be provided just 30 minutes each week, an unexpectedly limited amount of service for the purpose of preventing regression and enhancing recoupment of learning.

## Other Items of Note Related to CRLS IEPs

Across all IEPs reviewed, this pattern was noted that merits mention:

- As was the case for the IEPs from Haggerty School and the upper schools, the CRLS IEPs seem to have quite a bit of redundancy, with information included in two or three places, sometimes verbatim. Part of this may be related to MA-required IEP verbiage, but this might be an area to explore in terms of streamlining their preparation.

## Summary of CRLS Data

The professionals at CRLS unambiguously demonstrated their dedication to their students and their school through the various project data collection activities. They made time to meet during a particularly frenetic two days of the school year, they were welcoming during observations of co-teaching, and they wrote passionately on the survey about their successes, their hopes, and their worries. They expressed gratitude at the opportunity to share their views regarding the future of special education programs and services. Their comments during the focus groups/interviews followed a distinct pattern of identifying a concern or problem, but immediately suggesting a way the concern could be addressed or the problem solved.

*Trepidation* characterizes the overall tone of the data set. Embedded in it is a recognition that changes are necessary in order to ensure that students with disabilities leave high school better prepared for their various avenues of adulthood, but that recognition is accompanied by fear that the successful elements of the current programs and services may be dismantled and that new, potentially less effective, options may be put in place without an adequate understanding of the subtleties that affect day-to-day implementation and the context in which CRLS special education services must be placed.

## District Administrators' Input

In addition to the data gathered from the staff members at the four upper schools and CRLS, interviews were conducted with three district-level general education administrators. These conversations were primarily intended to clarify district priorities, explain some of the history

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influencing current practices, and contribute to understanding of possible future directions. This section briefly summarizes topics addressed with them:

- Explanation of the innovation agenda
  - Evolution of the current model of co-teaching in sixth grade, including the original intent, the changes in leadership that occurred during its planning stage, the professional development related to this service model, and related opportunities and challenges
  - Uncertainties about the future of the upper school co-teaching model
  - Expectations for the upper school co-taught math classes and the general and special education teachers staffing them
  - The rationale for the math curriculum to be implemented beginning in 2014-2015
  - The diversity of students in the district and the instructional ramifications of this diversity
  - Concerns about the skills of both general and special educators for meeting the diverse needs of students with disabilities
  - Concerns about the dynamic between general education and special education systems and the importance of continuing to work to blend these two areas in order to improve outcomes for students
  - The challenges of ensuring that students with disabilities are truly accessing grade level curriculum
  - The need for gathering more data related to students with disabilities and using it to make instructional decisions
  - The potential of co-teaching but the high need for professional development so that teachers and leaders better understand it and can explore all its variations
  - The status of RTI in CPS, including explanation of the overall standard-protocol model being implemented
  - The need for a systems approach to examining the various initiatives in the district
  - Community factors that influence programs and services, general and special education, in CPS
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- The perception in the CPS community of receiving special education services as a potentially positive option (rather than a stigmatizing one)
  - Variations on the meaning of inclusiveness in CPS, including the expectations set for students and the importance of ensuring that a single vision is in place for the education of all CPS students, including those with disabilities
  - The district efforts to incorporate data into instructional decision-making
  - The challenges of keeping the “old” while trying to implement the “new”
  - Perspectives on families and family involvement, including all families (not just those of students with disabilities)

## Recommendations

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As a prelude to the recommendations that comprise this section of the report, it seems important to express thanks to the professionals who contributed to this snapshot of the special education programs and services, especially co-teaching and inclusive practices, at the upper schools and CRLS. Several individuals indicated that they were grateful for the opportunity to provide input for shaping next steps for effectively educating students with disabilities, and every individual was cordial, constructive in his or her comments, and reflective concerning areas of strength and concern. On the surveys, some individuals wrote multiple-paragraph comments, an indication of their willingness to contribute to this effort, and some of the focus groups and interviews became intense conversations exploring complex issues that could easily have been ignored, but that were essential in understanding CPS models and priorities.

This part of the report is divided into three sections. The first two parts include recommendations that are specific to the upper schools or CRLS. The third section contains recommendations for the district; these are based on the data gathered at Haggerty School (and two of these recommendations were included in that report), the upper schools, and CRLS, and they apply to all those schools. Of course, their relevance for the remaining CPS schools can only be determined by district leaders because those schools were not part of this project.

### Upper School Recommendations

1. *Re-examine co-teaching as a service delivery model for students with disabilities to determine, based on data, its appropriate use.*

At the current time, co-teaching is employed at all the upper schools in sixth grade mathematics classes, and only in those classes. Although professionals indicate this is an

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effective approach, it could be questioned whether an all-day model is needed and whether some co-teaching should be designated for English/language arts or other classes. For example, if students needing co-taught math were assigned to two sections of math, those would be co-taught and the special educator would be available for other instructional responsibilities during other class periods. Two companion discussions are needed with this recommendation: (a) a careful re-definition of co-teaching to align with that more widely used in the field and that would create broader opportunities for instruction in general education classes, and (b) equity in case management assignments (i.e., special educators co-teaching in sixth grade math rarely share in this responsibility, thus increasing others' workloads).

- 2. Articulate a range of service delivery options for students with disabilities that truly reflects a continuum.*

This recommendation is an extension of the one just outlined. It is based on the fact that a clear rationale for upper school service models is difficult to discern. For example, why is co-teaching universal for sixth grade math, but as the same students move to seventh or eighth grade this option is no longer available? It is not credible to assume no students beyond sixth grade need this relatively intensive level of service. Similarly, how is it justified that one other special educator may “push in” to an English/language arts class on a daily basis, but this is not considered co-teaching? It seems that if two teachers teach together every day, partnership should be a goal.

In addition to co-teaching as a point on the service delivery continuum, it is also imperative that the upper school professionals determine how students could receive supplemental resource-only services (e.g., learning strategies and study skills) and how such options would need to be coordinated with co-teaching responsibilities. Finally, the number of students with learning disabilities (LD) being educated in separate sections was mentioned by participants and is worrisome. Nationwide, only 8 percent of all students with LD are in general education for less than 40 percent of the school day (U.S. Department of Education, 2013), and separate classes are increasingly rare because of the very real risk that students will not have full access to the general curriculum in which they must succeed. Because this project did not look specifically at this program, further detail cannot be provided. However, an examination of the continuum of services should include this option as well as those that are less restrictive.

- 3. School leaders should ensure that the new math curriculum does not lead to inadvertent tracking of students with disabilities.*

Participants made many comments about the math curriculum that has been piloted and is to be implemented for the 2014-2015 school year. The perception is that the “levels” to which students will be assigned likely will result in students being, in essence, tracked. This is a particularly complex issue when discussing students with disabilities. Even

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though they struggle academically, a large majority of them have average or above average ability, and the potential exists that they will not have access to the most challenging courses or instruction. The option of ensuring that changes are made in delivery and methodology rather than the level of material is an integral component of the effective delivery of special education services.

4. *For the 2014-2015 school year, focus resources and attention on the social/emotional/behavioral needs of students with disabilities as well as other students who struggle to learn.*

A strong theme among the upper school participants was the challenges of teaching students with serious social/emotional/behavioral needs. It included concern for students' well-being, frustration with existing options, and recognition that this domain should be an upper school priority. Counselors were described as heavily over-worked, school psychologists have significant responsibilities related to special education procedures (and, according to participants, thus do not have much opportunity to work with students), and behavior specialists (because of the nature of the role) are seen as occasional consultants who cannot effectively identify and change student behaviors. Although many options exist to increase support in this domain, one strategy would be to re-define the responsibilities of school psychologists, enabling them to more directly use the behavior management skills they possess. The procedural duties could become (as is the case in most school districts) the responsibility of a site administrator or another special education representative. Another approach would be to more clearly articulate how behavior specialists should function, including the protocol they are to follow from initial contact through observation, meetings, and recommendations, to follow-up, adjustment, re-design, or exit.

## CRLS Recommendations

1. *Articulate a continuum of services available for students with disabilities, one that spans all grade levels and the entire range of needs of students with disabilities.*

In reviewing all the data sets from CRLS, it is striking how often participants would mention what is or is not allowed in relation to students with disabilities (e.g., in twelfth grade, students may attend a strategies class but co-teaching is not available; some students in other grades would benefit from a resource-type class or a reading class, but that is not available). The school's schedule should not form a rationale for only offering services at particular levels of intensity, and options should exist regardless of the student's grade level.

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- 2. Address and resolve the real or imagined issues related to students with disabilities enrolling in honors courses.*

Multiple respondent groups noted that when students are transitioning from eighth to ninth grade, some parents exit their children from special education (called a "sign out") because they want their children to be enrolled in honors classes, and this option may not be possible if they are receiving special education services. In some cases, these students are given a Section 504 plan so that they continue to receive accommodations. From the repeated discussion of this topic, this appears to be associated with a perception that college prep level classes (which may be co-taught) are less desirable and more likely to have a disproportionate number of students with academic and behavior problems.

It is understandable that various departments in a large high school will have preferred strategies for structuring and delivering coursework. However, professionals should keep in mind that those options may not exclude students with disabilities or necessitate that they give up the protections of special education in order to access them. And if this is a misperception, school leaders should create a specific plan to correct this serious misunderstanding.

- 3. Improve the transition plans recorded on IEPs for students with disabilities, and ensure they are implemented by gathering relevant data.*

The transition plans for the IEPs reviewed as part of this project suggest that transition is addressed as required, but only in a relatively superficial manner. No IEP included data related to vocational assessment or self-determination, and many of the goals written for transition used words such as "encourage" or "recommended." Transition goals, like other IEP goals, should be observable and measurable, and special educators are charged with ensuring that these goals are accomplished. The goals also should address a wide range of domains, from communication to independence skills to post-secondary education options. A transition plan should clearly assist students to identify goals and then should guide them in successfully completing high school prepared for whatever post-school aspirations they have.

- 4. Renew the professional conversation about inclusive practices and co-teaching with a goal of re-culturing CRLS.*

In some ways, CRLS is a school of paradox for students with disabilities. The professionals who participated in the snapshot clearly enjoyed working with diverse learners and were constantly seeking ways to help them succeed, and their efforts are a formidable strength for the school. At the same time, participants discussed a "constant battle" between general and special education, noting that too many teachers have as a goal avoiding working with students who struggle to learn or who may have behavior or

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other problems. Input was provided that co-taught classes often have a disproportionately high number of learners with challenges because other school staff members will recommend that a two-teacher class is best for the student's needs (rather than a solo-taught class). In addition, it was repeatedly stated that co-teaching is largely voluntary (and when it is not, the assignment often goes to novice educators) and that co-teaching most often can only be truly effective when the professionals choose to participate. Taken together, these layers of beliefs and practices suggest a school culture that is not particularly inclusive, one that creates divisions and segregation and that fosters misunderstanding and miscommunication. Given the proud tradition in the Cambridge Public Schools of inclusiveness, it seems that the time may be right to analyze current practices, engage in the difficult conversations that are needed, and begin to reshape the expectations for all staff members for working with the entire diversity of the student population.

## CPS Recommendations

For the sake of completeness, this section includes two district-level recommendations that were made based on the snapshot of Haggerty School. These are noted first, and in some ways they are extended in the remainder of the recommendations, those developed after data collection and analysis at the upper schools and CRLS.

### Recommendations from the Report on Haggerty School

1. *Design and implement a process for making inclusive practices an expectation in all Cambridge schools.*

The quality of Haggerty School staff members' efforts in educating students with disabilities has opportunities and drawbacks. Parents know that their children will be welcomed at Haggerty and that staff members will do everything possible to nurture their development. However, the result of Haggerty's reputation is that it has so many students with disabilities and other special needs enrolled that it likely interferes with the pacing of curriculum, the management of student behaviors, and academic and other outcomes that could be accomplished for students with disabilities as well as for those who are typical learners. In addition, other schools may perceive that they have less obligation to meet the needs of students with disabilities. This influences school culture, denies other students and teachers the opportunity of learning about diversity, and undermines the very concept of inclusiveness. Further, the argument that the current model enables appropriate concentration of resources at Haggerty School is the same argument that was used 30 years ago to preserve separate special education schools, an argument ultimately found to be invalid.

2. *Systematically review potentially problematic special education policies and procedures to ensure they reflect contemporary expectations and best practice.*
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Many school districts are finding that the special education procedures in place for the past decade or more must be revised in order to align them with current expectations. One example is clarification of expectations for the preparation of IEPs, an item included above for Haggerty staff members but probably appropriate for professionals throughout the district. Because IEPs are the documents central to the effective delivery of special education services and thus the outcomes student achieve, it is essential that they be written to reflect contemporary expectation, including data-based present level of performance, measurable goals and objectives/benchmarks that are aligned with standards, and so on.

A second example related to this recommendation concerns a topic mentioned by several participants but not directly observed, that is, the roles and responsibilities of the school psychologist. Specifically, it was mentioned by participants that a school psychologist serves as the local education agency (LEA) representative at IEP meetings and is responsible for all the tasks related to those meetings. Comments were shared about the workload for these professionals. What is striking is that this assignment of responsibility, although common two decades ago, is very rare today, largely because it prevents these professionals from offering other services. For example, psychologists could help in addressing behavior and social/emotional needs, mentioned frequently by participants in this project, if the LEA responsibility was otherwise assigned. For clarification, this role often is played by a school administrator or an assigned special education coordinator.

### Recommendations based on the Upper Schools and CRLS Snapshots

The recommendations that follow derive from the collective information gathered as part of this project. By the time this project is completed, however, it is possible that some of these recommendation may already be planned or underway through Dr. Greer's leadership. Because it is beyond the scope of this work to account for other initiatives, the recommendations are offered with that understanding and may serve to reinforce other initiatives or to suggest additional possibilities.

1. *Clarify the district vision for what inclusiveness means for students with disabilities and their families, including the place of co-teaching in a continuum of service options.*

Though the term *inclusion* is noticeable across CPS, it appears that its meaning has been interpreted in different ways by various professional groups. This recommendation is not meant to be simplistic: Re-focusing on what inclusive education is would be a major undertaking requiring difficult conversations, uncomfortable topics, and changes that might be painful. However, because it is obvious that professionals in CPS do want what is best for students and do take pride in their roles in improving outcomes for them, this foundational step may help cause other efforts and initiatives to be clearer and more readily implemented.

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General statements about inclusiveness must be accompanied by succinctly defined, readily understood operational guidelines. Co-teaching is a service option that is implemented in CPS, but schools seem to have adopted their own meaning for that term and their own expectations for what it involves. Individual variation by school is perhaps inevitable, but baseline understandings should be shared and non-negotiable.

- 2. Create a structure for ongoing, constructive stakeholder input on long-term goals and plans for special education in CPS.*

Perhaps because of the number of changes in special education leadership as well as a history of initiatives that tend to begin and end with those leaders' tenure, a sense of distrust and uncertainty was communicated across the data sets. It is recommended that stakeholders, especially teachers, have a mechanism for providing their ideas and opinions related to the changes that are likely over the next several years.

- 3. Examine special education staffing patterns in order to create general guidelines for deploying teachers, related services personnel, and other staff members.*

In both the upper schools and CRLS (as well as Haggerty School), when professionals were asked what could be done to improve programs and services, the immediate answer was "more staff." It is impossible, in this snapshot, to understand whether such statements have merit. What such comments do suggest, however, is that a decision-making process for staff workloads and assignments is needed. Exceptions certainly would still exist, but in the best interests of facilitating the education and post-school lives of students with disabilities, supports other than additional people should be considered. Further, it is imperative that professionals' workloads be appropriate and relatively equitably distributed. This recommendation probably requires additional exploration, but many bits of data suggest that attention is necessary in order to create effective and efficient programs and services for the next several school years and beyond.

- 4. Increase transparency in communication among special education service providers as well as between the Office of Student Services (OSS) and administrators and general education teachers and the OSS and other district departments.*

In reviewing the data, it became apparent that professionals have had, and continue to have, many questions about current and proposed special education structures and directions. Part of this occurrence is undoubtedly because of the relatively brief tenure of Dr. Greer, but it seems to be more than newness. Participants noted that multiple responses to questions were not unusual, that some questions in the past have gone unanswered, that rumors contribute to uncertainty, and that some communication revolves around perceived power and the repercussions of disagreement.

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5. *Improve special education professionals' skills for preparing IEPs that are consonant with contemporary standards.*

The IEPs that were reviewed reflect considerable expenditure of time and energy, and yet few of them were unequivocally data based and few of them demonstrated a direct and clear relationship among present level of performance, goals, and service delivery structure. It should be noted that the need to re-visit IEP preparation is common in the current era of educational reform. In particular, IEPs now should be written based on academic standards, but they should clearly address deficits students have that are preventing them from reaching the standards, possibly in areas such as foundational knowledge, tool skills, communication skills, or social interaction skills. The intent is not to make IEPs lengthier than they are (in fact, it is highly recommended that permission is sought to shorten some segments of the IEPs that appear redundant); it is to ensure that IEPs provide the guidance needed for specially designed instruction to be implemented, preferably, in the general education setting.

A critical component of addressing IEP-writing is the need for data, including that for describing present levels of performance, that for designing instruction, and that for determining instructional effectiveness and progress monitoring. Perhaps professionals have not had sufficient preparation for gathering and using data as an ongoing part of their responsibilities or perhaps the expectation has not been set in special education that data be the foundation for decision-making. Regardless of the reason, enhancing professionals' skills for gathering and using data is central to this recommendation.

6. *Create, implement, and evaluate, with colleagues in general education departments, a master plan for professional development related to students with disabilities, co-teaching, instructional strategies, behavior management, and related topics.*

Administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, and other staff members all expressed a desire to learn more about meeting the needs of students with disabilities. Some individuals indicated that too many professionals in general education have had scant preparation for understanding these students' characteristics and needs. Others noted that they know too few strategies for better designing instruction for these students. Many teachers requested further professional development for addressing students' social/emotional/behavioral needs. Yet others indicated that they should have a better understanding of the legal aspects of special education. A common thread in the data sets was that it has been several years since professional development has been offered on a consistent basis related to working with students with disabilities, but that such professional development would be welcomed. Interestingly, professional development was identified as a need as often by special educators as by general educators.

Within this recommendation, though, it is assumed that professional development could have many faces. For example, some educators might benefit from a book study or

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professional learning community on the topic of co-teaching. Others might access already-available on-line resources for learning about students with disabilities. Yet others might visit other classrooms in the district or in nearby districts to learn how other professionals instruct students with disabilities. Any professional development also would need to be coordinated with other initiatives and activities based on the recommendations in this report (e.g., clarifying the meaning of inclusiveness).

- 7. In the planning and implementation of co-teaching and other inclusive practices, measure decisions against a metric of sustainability.*

No one would argue that people influence school priorities and practices. However, those priorities and practices should not be highly dependent on the goals, wishes, preferences, or knowledge base of particular individuals. Instead, they should be designed so as to be sustainable. One model indicates that these factors should be considered in developing sustainable practices: (a) an institutional shared purpose that is identified as a priority for the district's future; (b) feasibility, that is, the implementation within existing priorities and resources; (c) impact, that is, implementation with measurable outcomes so that effectiveness can be judged and adjustments made; and (d) adaptability, that is, the potential to make changes to the practice as conditions change and to implement across settings while preserving integrity.

As noted earlier, participant input suggests that at least some decisions and practices have been the result of the commitment or preferences of individuals, changing as soon as those individuals leave the district. As with topics for professionals development, it is crucial that the district leadership reach consensus on key aspects of special education services and that these aspects are institutionalized, clearly communicated, and accountability at all levels (i.e., district, site, classroom).

- 8. Map out and communicate to all stakeholders a 3-5 year plan for facilitating the evolution of co-teaching, other inclusive practices, and related special education programs and services.*

A basic tenet of leadership is that change needs to occur in increments. Too many changes implemented too quickly may result in miscommunication, sabotage, and frustration. Change at too slow a pace often leads to a loss of momentum. In many ways this recommendation is an extension of several others because it implies clear and transparent communication, involvement of key stakeholders, the delivery of professional development, and so on. Professionals in CPS are eager for next steps and anticipate learning about what those next steps will be. Buy-in for whatever direction is taken is much likely to be high if those affected by the changes feel that they are truly part of them.

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## Conclusion

Inclusive practices have shifted over the past decades from a kind notion for enhancing social access for students with disabilities, with academics viewed as a bonus but not a necessity, to a professional imperative for ensuring that the students can reach their potential. The Cambridge Public Schools have in place many of the resources—personnel, financial, instructional, and other—to facilitate the growth of the next generation of inclusive practices. However, the fact that many resources are in place does not necessarily mean that this journey will be an easy stroll down a carefree path. Instead, the work needed may be even more arduous and the path strewn with hidden perils just because so many resources are already in place and questions are likely to arise concerning why change is necessary. The dedication of CPS professionals, their determination to continue to improve options for students with disabilities, and their insights into what is now working well and what needs change will be central for accomplishing the goal. Ultimately, students will not just benefit but thrive through these efforts.

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## Appendix A: Survey Instruments

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# Survey about CPS Upper School Special Education Programs and Services

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## INTRODUCTION

In order to have the most accurate snapshot of current special education programs and services at your school, you are being asked to take a few minutes to respond to this survey. There are 16 items, but each item is followed by a box so that you can make comments related to the topic. If everyone provides input, the information will be the most detailed and instructive, and everyone's best thinking will contribute to shaping next steps for educating students with disabilities. Note that this survey is part of a larger project to gather a snapshot of current CPS special education programs and services in order to plan for the future services for students with disabilities.

THANK-YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION!

## CONSENT

By clicking on the "Proceed to Survey" button, you are indicating that you are agreeing to participate in this survey and have your input included in the aggregated results. No individual identifying information is being gathered.

[Proceed to Survey](#)

## Current Role:

- General education teacher
- Special education teacher
- Paraprofessional
- Related services professional
- Administrator
- Other

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## Survey Questions

### FOCUS ON STUDENTS:

1. Special education programs/services at my school meet the academic needs of students with disabilities.

strongly disagree    disagree    neutral/undecided    agree    strongly agree

Comments regarding the topic of Item 1

2. Special education programs/services at my school meet the social/behavioral needs of students with disabilities.

strongly disagree    disagree    neutral/undecided    agree    strongly agree

Comments regarding the topic of Item 2

3. Special education programs/services at my school interfere with the academic achievement of students who do not have disabilities.

strongly disagree      disagree      neutral/undecided      agree      strongly agree



Comments regarding the topic of Item 3

4. Special education programs/services at my school interfere with the social/behavioral development of students who do not have disabilities.

strongly disagree      disagree      neutral/undecided      agree      strongly agree



Comments regarding the topic of Item 4

**FOCUS ON STAFF MEMBERS:**

5. General educators at my school are satisfied with special education programs and services.

strongly disagree      disagree      neutral/undecided      agree      strongly agree



Comments regarding the topic of Item 5

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6. Special educators at my school are satisfied with special education programs and services.

strongly disagree      disagree      neutral/undecided      agree      strongly agree



Comments regarding the topic of Item 6

◀▶

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7. Paraprofessionals at my school are satisfied with special education programs and services.

strongly disagree      disagree      neutral/undecided      agree      strongly agree



Comments regarding the topic of Item 7

8. Related services staff members at my school are satisfied with special education programs and services.

strongly disagree      disagree      neutral/undecided      agree      strongly agree



Comments regarding the topic of Item 8

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**FOCUS ON PROGRAMS AND SERVICES:**

9. Co-teaching is effective in accomplishing the joint goals of curriculum access and the provision of special education services.

strongly disagree    disagree    neutral/undecided    agree    strongly agree

Comments regarding the topic of Item 9

10. My school has options for intervening with at-risk students in order to prevent the need for special education.

strongly disagree    disagree    neutral/undecided    agree    strongly agree

Comments regarding the topic of Item 10

11. We need to make changes in our programs and services to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

strongly disagree    disagree    neutral/undecided    agree    strongly agree



Comments regarding the topic of Item 11

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**FOCUS ON OTHER SUPPORTS AND PERCEPTIONS:**

12. My principal is supportive of special education programs and services at my school.

strongly disagree    disagree    neutral/undecided    agree    strongly agree



Comments regarding the topic of Item 12

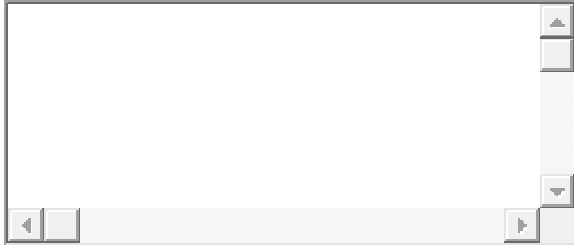
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13. The district is supportive of special education programs and practices at my school.

strongly disagree      disagree      neutral/undecided      agree      strongly agree



Comments regarding the topic of Item 13

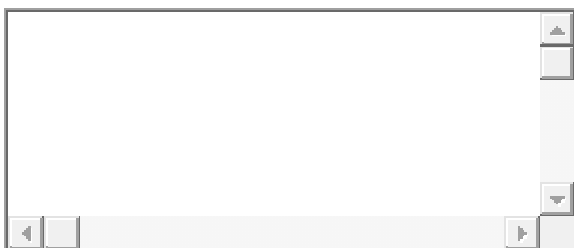


14. Parents are satisfied with special education services at my school.

strongly disagree      disagree      neutral/undecided      agree      strongly agree



Comments regarding the topic of Item 14



15. My school is characterized by a strong collaborative culture.

strongly disagree      disagree      neutral/undecided      agree      strongly agree





Comments regarding the topic of Item 15

An empty rectangular text input box with a light gray border. It features a vertical scrollbar on the right side and a horizontal scrollbar at the bottom, both with small arrowheads.

**Other Comments:**

16. What other comments would you like to make about the past, present, or future of special education, related services, and inclusive practices at your school?

An empty rectangular text input box with a light gray border. It features a vertical scrollbar on the right side and a horizontal scrollbar at the bottom, both with small arrowheads.

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We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.  
Your response has been recorded.

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## Survey about CPS High School Special Education Programs and Services

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### INTRODUCTION

In order to have the most accurate snapshot of current special education programs and services at your school, you are being asked to take a few minutes to respond to this survey. There are 16 items, but each item is followed by a box so that you can make comments related to the topic. If everyone provides input, the information will be the most detailed and instructive, and everyone's best thinking will contribute to shaping next steps for educating students with disabilities. Note that this survey is part of a larger project to gather a snapshot of current CPS special education programs and services in order to plan for the future services for students with disabilities.

THANK-YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION!

### CONSENT

By clicking on the "Proceed to Survey" button, you are indicating that you are agreeing to participate in this survey and have your input included in the aggregated results. No individual identifying information is being gathered.

[Proceed to Survey](#)

### Current Role:

- General education teacher
  - Special education teacher
  - Paraprofessional
  - Related services professional
  - Administrator
  - Other
-

**Do you currently co-teach?**

- Yes     No     NA (e.g., for administrators)

Back    Next

Survey Questions

**FOCUS ON STUDENTS:**

1. Special education programs/services at CRLS meet the academic needs of students with disabilities.

- strongly disagree    disagree    neutral/undecided    agree    strongly agree
- 

Comments regarding the topic of Item 1



2. Special education programs/services at CRLS meet the social/behavioral needs of students with disabilities.

- strongly disagree    disagree    neutral/undecided    agree    strongly agree
- 
-

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Comments regarding the topic of Item 2

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3. Special education programs/services at CRLS interfere with the academic achievement of students who do not have disabilities.

strongly disagree    disagree    neutral/undecided    agree    strongly agree

Comments regarding the topic of Item 3

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4. Special education programs/services at CRLS interfere with the social/behavioral development of students who do not have disabilities.

strongly disagree    disagree    neutral/undecided    agree    strongly agree

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Comments regarding the topic of Item 4

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Back Next

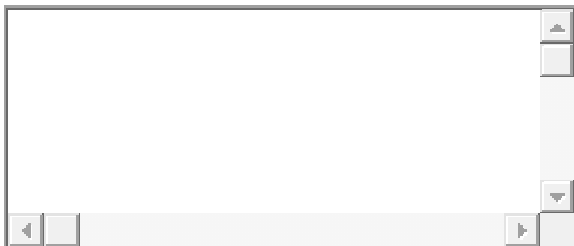
**FOCUS ON STAFF MEMBERS:**

5. General educators at CRLS are satisfied with special education programs and services.

strongly disagree    disagree    neutral/undecided    agree    strongly agree

Comments regarding the topic of Item 5

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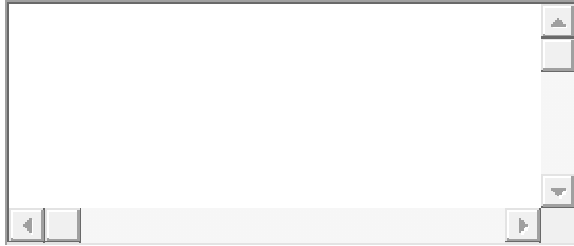
6. Special educators at CRLS are satisfied with special education programs and services.

strongly disagree    disagree    neutral/undecided    agree    strongly agree

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Comments regarding the topic of Item 6

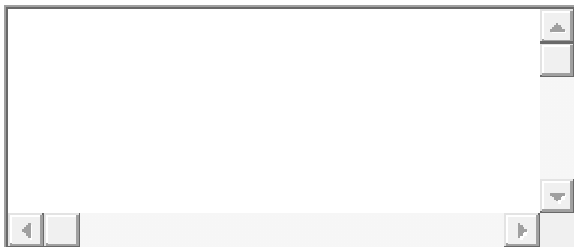
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7. Paraprofessionals at CRLS are satisfied with special education programs and services.

strongly disagree      disagree      neutral/undecided      agree      strongly agree

Comments regarding the topic of Item 7

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8. Related services staff members at CRLS are satisfied with special education programs and services.

strongly disagree      disagree      neutral/undecided      agree      strongly agree

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Comments regarding the topic of Item 8



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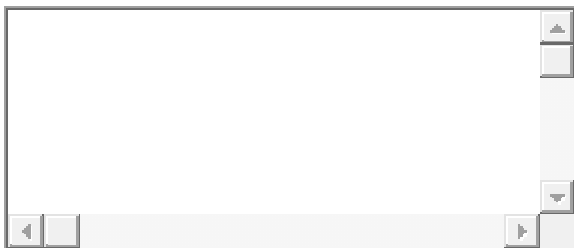
**FOCUS ON PROGRAMS AND SERVICES:**

9. Co-teaching is effective in accomplishing the joint goals of curriculum access and the provision of special education services.

strongly disagree    disagree    neutral/undecided    agree    strongly agree

Comments regarding the topic of Item 9



10. RTI is functioning in a way that provides intensive intervention to possibly prevent the need for special education.

strongly disagree    disagree    neutral/undecided    agree    strongly agree

Comments regarding the topic of Item 10



11. We need to make changes in our programs and services to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

strongly disagree    disagree    neutral/undecided    agree    strongly agree



Comments regarding the topic of Item 11



[Back](#) [Next](#)

**FOCUS ON OTHER SUPPORTS AND PERCEPTIONS:**

12. My principal is supportive of special education programs and services at CRLS.

strongly disagree    disagree    neutral/undecided    agree    strongly agree





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Comments regarding the topic of Item 12

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13. The district is supportive of special education programs and practices at CRLS.

strongly disagree    disagree    neutral/undecided    agree    strongly agree

Comments regarding the topic of Item 13

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14. Parents are satisfied with special education services at CRLS.

strongly disagree    disagree    neutral/undecided    agree    strongly agree

Comments regarding the topic of Item 14

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15. CRLS is characterized by a strong collaborative culture.

strongly disagree    disagree    neutral/undecided    agree    strongly agree

Comments regarding the topic of Item 15

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**Other Comments:**

16. What other comments would you like to make about the past, present, or future of special education, related services, and inclusive practices at CRLS?

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.  
Your response has been recorded.

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## Appendix B: Focus Group and Interview Protocols

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## GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUPS

### **Introduction:**

- Who am I?
  - Why am I here?
  - What do I already know? (Stress long positive history of inclusiveness in this school district)
  - What is the purpose of this focus group?
  - Who are you? (Who is in the group?)
  - Note: Stress this is a snapshot, a contribution to the thinking about shaping the strong foundation into its next level; also address anonymity, need to record the conversation, use of the results
1. How would you characterize the beliefs among staff members in this school regarding the inclusive education of students with disabilities? Your beliefs? Others? What is the range?
  2. When you think about inclusive practices in this school compared to what you know about inclusive practices in other places you have taught or others you know about, what are the similarities/dissimilarities? Advantages/disadvantages?
  3. How is the current structure working (for example, distribution of special education staff, service models, support from the district, professional development)? Positives? Problems? For problems, what could be done to alleviate them?
  4. One piece of data available to everyone is that SWD are not improving at the expected rate in terms of academic achievement. To what do you attribute this information? What are your ideas about steps that could be taken to improve these students' learning?
-

5. Many researchers have reported that collaboration is a key to effective inclusive schooling, and yet collaboration can be complex and challenging. In what ways is collaboration effective/successful at your school? What are current challenges to collaboration? Within your school? School to district? Other?
  6. Co-teaching generally is implemented as a vehicle for supporting students with disabilities in general education classes. How well does it accomplish that purpose? What happens if a student with a disability needs services in another setting? If co-teaching is a primary model, how are students' IEPs written to ensure that their unique needs are being met?
  7. In inclusive schools, one challenge often faced is addressing students' IEP goals in the context of the general education classroom. How does that occur? What are examples of specially designed instruction occurring in co-taught classes to meet students' needs? How effective are these interventions? What data are kept related to students' learning in general education settings? How are these data used for planning instruction?
  8. What are parents' views of the programs and services at your school? If you were asked to predict what they would like to see to improve them, what do you think they would say? What would they say to keep? To eliminate? To change?
  9. What else would help me to understand your school, whether its past, its present, or its future? What do you think it would take to help your school evolve from the school it is today to the one that would be called visionary—for students with disabilities-- in the future?
-

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## GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS

- **Introduction:**

- Introductions—your history in Cambridge Public Schools?
  - Who am I?
  - Why am I here?
  - What do I already know?
  - What is the purpose of this interview?
  - Note: Context is that change is already underway. This is a contribution to the change process, especially the programs and services portion. Not intended in any way to address the organizational/staffing dimension of student services.
1. What are the strengths/accomplishments of your school/CPS in terms of educating students with disabilities?
  2. What are the liabilities/challenges of your school/CPS in terms of educating students with disabilities?
  3. Achievement scores of students with disabilities seem to be an area in which improvement has not been as steady as hoped. What might it take to change this?
  4. From what I've learned, CPS is engaged in a number of initiatives that affect teachers and students. How are perspectives and needs of students with disabilities and their teachers and related staff incorporated in to planning, professional development, implementation, and evaluation of these initiatives?
  5. Websites for all the schools as well as the district emphasize inclusiveness. What does that mean from your leadership perspective? Beyond special education? How would you characterize the beliefs among staff members in your school/in the district regarding special education in general? The inclusive education of students with disabilities? Other students? What is the range?

For someone with extensive experience in the district: How did the district evolve to the current system?

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For all: How are decisions made about the setting in which students with disabilities are educated?

6. How effective is the current set of programs and services (for example, distribution of special education staff, service models, support from the district to schools, professional development)? Positives? Problems? For problems, what could be done to alleviate them?
  7. Many researchers have reported that collaboration is a key to effective inclusive schooling, and yet collaboration can be complex and challenging. In what ways is collaboration effective/successful at your school, at the district team level? What are current challenges to collaboration? Within school? School to district? District? District to school?
  8. PRINCIPALS/DEANS ONLY: Co-teaching is a vehicle for supporting students with disabilities in general education classes. How well does it accomplish that purpose? What happens if a student with a disability needs services in another setting? If co-teaching is a primary model, how are students' IEPs written to ensure that their unique needs are being met?
  9. PRINCIPALS/ DEANS ONLY: What are your expectations for teachers to use data to make instructional decisions regarding students with disabilities?
  10. What are parents' views of the programs and services at your school/CPS? If you were asked to predict what they would like to see to improve them, what do you think they would say? What would they say to keep? To eliminate? To change?
  11. What else would help me to understand special education programs and services your school/CPS, whether their past, their present, or their future? What do you think it would take to help your school/the district evolve from the /district it is today to the one that would be called visionary—for students with disabilities--in the future?
  12. FOR DISTRICT ONLY: How is professional development prioritized at the district level and delivered to teachers and other staff? What proportion of professional development focuses on students with disabilities and other learners with special needs?
  13. FOR DISTRICT ONLY: What is your view of the history of inclusive services in the CPS
-

and current situation? How does this affect outcomes for students with disabilities? Is the arrangement ok? In need of change?

14. FOR DISTRICT ONLY: What accountability systems are in place regarding principals' roles in setting expectations at school sites for effective special education programs and services? Gathering data regarding them? Fostering change to improve outcomes and reduce the gap?



## Appendix C: Template for Classroom Observations

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## Observation Instrument

### Demographics

1. Date :
2. Time :
3. Teachers:
4. Principal:
5. Grade level:
6. Subject or course:
7. Lesson objective:
8. Total number of students:
9. Total number of SWD:
10. Other adults in classroom:

### Furniture

1. \_\_\_ Desks in rows/aisles
2. \_\_\_ Desks in small groups
3. \_\_\_ Desks in alternative arrangement (e.g., u-shape)
4. \_\_\_ Tables instead of desks
5. \_\_\_ SWD distributed throughout classroom
6. \_\_\_ Furniture/equipment arranged for co- teaching:
7. \_\_\_ Other furniture comments:

### Classroom Equipment in Use

1. \_\_\_ Teacher computer
  2. \_\_\_ Student computer(s) or tablet devices
  3. \_\_\_ Television
  4. \_\_\_ Smart board/media projector
  5. \_\_\_ Overhead projector or document camera
  6. \_\_\_ Whiteboard/chalkboard
  7. \_\_\_ Timer used-any type. Purpose:
  8. \_\_\_ Other equipment Specify:
-

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## Materials

1.  Lesson plans available incorporating co-teaching
2.  Worksheet(s)
3.  Textbooks used
4.  Student notebooks/paper and pencil
5.  Other books used (e.g., novels, storybooks, primary sources)
6.  Instructional/adaptive technology in use:
7.  Manipulatives used-several/all students:
8.  Examples of differentiated materials. Specify:
9.  Evidence of materials for specially designed instruction. Specify:
10.  Other materials:

## Displays

1.  Student work
2.  Class rules/expectations
3.  Schedule
4.  Objectives for today:
5.  Instructional prompts (e.g., word wall, math formulae):
6.  Motivational items (e.g., posters, banners):
7.  Other:
8.  Other:

## Co-Teaching Approach(es)

1.  1 teach, 1 observe
  2.  Station teaching
  3.  Parallel teaching
  4.  Alternative teaching
  5.  Teaming
  6.  1 teach, 1 assist
  7.  No co-teaching
  8.  Approach seems intentional, to meet goal of instruction
  9.  Instructional intensity greater than that of a 1-teacher class
-

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## Teaching and Engagement

1. \_\_\_ Instructional pace is brisk
2. \_\_\_ Transitions minimize time loss
3. \_\_\_ Instruction is clearly organized
4. \_\_\_ PBS system is implemented
5. \_\_\_ Choral responding:
6. \_\_\_ Use of action, raps, dances to facilitate learning
7. \_\_\_ Use of visuals to aid instruction
8. \_\_\_ Use of manipulatives:
9. \_\_\_ Evidence of instructional differentiation:
10. \_\_\_ Data collection. Specify:
11. \_\_\_ Other teaching techniques Specify:

## Evidence of Specially Designed Instruction, Accommodations, Modifications

Examples:

## Teacher Interactions and Participation

1. \_\_\_ Solo taught class
2. \_\_\_ GET leads most instruction
3. \_\_\_ SET leads most instruction
4. \_\_\_ Instructional roles are equitable
5. \_\_\_ Instructional talk is approximately equal
6. \_\_\_ Teachers interact with each other to facilitate instruction
7. \_\_\_ Behavior management/classroom management is shared
8. \_\_\_ Indicators of parity. Examples:
9. \_\_\_ Other

## Notes

Lesson outline and items of note

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## Appendix D: Template for IEP Reviews

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IEP DATA SUMMARY

Name	No.			Gender	M	F	Grade			Age		
Disability	AU	CI	DD	EI	HI	II	NI	PI	SI	SLD		
Meeting type	IN	RE	AR	AM	ESY			Assmt Partn		1	2	3
<b>PLEP (and results)</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intellectual Ability</li> <li>• Achievement</li> <li>• Social/Emotional/Behavioral</li> <li>• Speech/language</li> <li>• OT/PT</li> <li>• Anecdotal</li> <li>• Screening</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>						<b>OTHER ASSMT DATA</b>						
						<b>TRANSITION INFORMATION</b>						
Academic Areas Affected			ELA	H/SS	MA	SCI/TECH	OTH					
Other Needs		APE		BR	EXCURR	SOC/EMOT		AT	COMM	LEP		
TRAVTR		BEH		DHH NONACAD VOC MOTOR OTH								
SDI		CONT		METH	PERFCRIT							
No. of Accommodations/Type			0	1-5	6-10	10-15	16-20	>20				
Exs:												

Notes/Comments:



<b>IEP Goals</b>				
Area	No. of Bmks./Objs.	Relevance of B/O to Goals 3=High 2=Med 1=Low	Relevance of B/O to State Standards (CCSS) 3=High 2=Med 1=Low	Notes
Reading				
Spelling				
Writing/Composition				
Math				
Sp/Lang or Communication				
Fine or Gross Motor				
Other				
Other				

<b>Service Delivery Grid</b>					
Service Type	Areas/Amount				
	Acad Str/Basics/ Other SE Setting	Sp/Lang	OT	OTH	OTH
Consultation					
General Education					
Other Locations					

## Appendix E: Aggregated Quantitative Survey Results (Upper Schools and CRLS)

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## Upper School Whole-Group Survey Results

### Current Role:

#	Answer	Response	%
1	General education teacher	54	46%
2	Special education teacher	29	25%
3	Paraprofessional	4	3%
4	Related services professional	15	13%
6	Other	15	13%
5	Administrator	1	1%
	Total	118	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	6
Mean	2.36
Variance	3.00
Standard Deviation	1.73
Total Responses	118

### 1. Special education programs/services at my school meet the academic needs of students with disabilities.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	strongly disagree	7	7%
2	disagree	36	35%
3	neutral/undecided	27	26%
4	agree	33	32%
5	strongly agree	1	1%
	Total	104	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	2.86
Variance	0.96
Standard Deviation	0.98
Total Responses	104

**2. Special education programs/services at my school meet the social/behavioral needs of students with disabilities.**

#	Answer		Response	%
1	strongly disagree		14	13%
2	disagree		39	38%
3	neutral/undecided		29	28%
4	agree		21	20%
5	strongly agree		1	1%
	Total		104	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	2.58
Variance	0.98
Standard Deviation	0.99
Total Responses	104

**3. Special education programs/services at my school interfere with the academic achievement of students who do not have disabilities.**

#	Answer		Response	%
1	strongly disagree		35	34%
2	disagree		43	41%
3	neutral/undecided		13	13%
4	agree		12	12%
5	strongly agree		1	1%
	Total		104	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	2.05
Variance	1.02
Standard Deviation	1.01
Total Responses	104

#### 4. Special education programs/services at my school interfere with the social/behavioral development of students who do not have disabilities.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	strongly disagree		35	34%
2	disagree		41	40%
3	neutral/undecided		16	16%
4	agree		11	11%
5	strongly agree		0	0%
	Total		103	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	4
Mean	2.03
Variance	0.93
Standard Deviation	0.96
Total Responses	103

#### 5. General educators at my school are satisfied with special education programs and services.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	strongly disagree		12	12%
2	disagree		37	36%
3	neutral/undecided		32	31%
4	agree		19	19%
5	strongly agree		2	2%
	Total		102	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	2.63
Variance	0.97
Standard Deviation	0.98
Total Responses	102

## 6. Special educators at my school are satisfied with special education programs and services.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	strongly disagree	15	15%
2	disagree	42	41%
3	neutral/undecided	30	29%
4	agree	14	14%
5	strongly agree	1	1%
	Total	102	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	2.45
Variance	0.88
Standard Deviation	0.94
Total Responses	102

## 7. Paraprofessionals at my school are satisfied with special education programs and services.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	strongly disagree	6	6%
2	disagree	19	19%
3	neutral/undecided	57	58%
4	agree	16	16%
5	strongly agree	1	1%
	Total	99	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	2.87
Variance	0.63
Standard Deviation	0.79
Total Responses	99

## 8. Related services staff members at my school are satisfied with special education programs and services.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	strongly disagree	3	3%
2	disagree	25	25%
3	neutral/undecided	56	56%
4	agree	15	15%
5	strongly agree	1	1%
	Total	100	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	2.86
Variance	0.55
Standard Deviation	0.74
Total Responses	100

## 9. Co-teaching is effective in accomplishing the joint goals of curriculum access and the provision of special education services.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	strongly disagree	4	4%
2	disagree	8	8%
3	neutral/undecided	21	21%
4	agree	37	37%
5	strongly agree	29	29%
	Total	99	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	3.80
Variance	1.16
Standard Deviation	1.08
Total Responses	99

### 10. My school has options for intervening with at-risk students in order to prevent the need for special education.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	strongly disagree	13	13%
2	disagree	33	33%
3	neutral/undecided	29	29%
4	agree	24	24%
5	strongly agree	2	2%
	Total	101	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	2.69
Variance	1.07
Standard Deviation	1.04
Total Responses	101

### 11. We need to make changes in our programs and services to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	strongly disagree	1	1%
2	disagree	3	3%
3	neutral/undecided	10	10%
4	agree	40	40%
5	strongly agree	47	47%
	Total	101	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	4.28
Variance	0.70
Standard Deviation	0.84
Total Responses	101

## 12. My principal is supportive of special education programs and services at my school.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	strongly disagree	3	3%
2	disagree	18	18%
3	neutral/undecided	21	21%
4	agree	44	44%
5	strongly agree	13	13%
	Total	99	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	3.46
Variance	1.07
Standard Deviation	1.03
Total Responses	99

## 13. The district is supportive of special education programs and practices at my school.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	strongly disagree	3	3%
2	disagree	23	24%
3	neutral/undecided	30	31%
4	agree	38	39%
5	strongly agree	3	3%
	Total	97	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	3.15
Variance	0.86
Standard Deviation	0.93
Total Responses	97

**14. Parents are satisfied with special education services at my school.**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	strongly disagree	1	1%
2	disagree	19	20%
3	neutral/undecided	48	51%
4	agree	26	27%
5	strongly agree	1	1%
	Total	95	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	3.07
Variance	0.56
Standard Deviation	0.75
Total Responses	95

**15. My school is characterized by a strong collaborative culture.**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	strongly disagree	4	4%
2	disagree	17	17%
3	neutral/undecided	33	34%
4	agree	36	37%
5	strongly agree	8	8%
	Total	98	100%






Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	3.28
Variance	0.96
Standard Deviation	0.98
Total Responses	98



**16. What other comments would you like to make about the past, present, or future of special education, related services, and inclusive practices at your school?**




## CRLS Whole-Group Survey Results

### Current Role:

#	Answer		Response	%
1	General education teacher		7	30%
2	Special education teacher		10	43%
3	Paraprofessional		0	0%
4	Related services professional		2	9%
6	Other		2	9%
5	Administrator		2	9%
	Total		23	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	6
Mean	2.48
Variance	2.72
Standard Deviation	1.65
Total Responses	23

### Do you currently co-teach?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		11	50%
2	No		10	45%
3	NA (e.g., for administrators)		1	5%
	Total		22	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	3
Mean	1.55
Variance	0.35
Standard Deviation	0.60
Total Responses	22

## 1. Special education programs/services at CRLS meet the academic needs of students with disabilities.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	strongly disagree	0	0%
2	disagree	0	0%
3	neutral/undecided	3	15%
4	agree	13	65%
5	strongly agree	4	20%
	Total	20	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	3
Max Value	5
Mean	4.05
Variance	0.37
Standard Deviation	0.60
Total Responses	20

## 2. Special education programs/services at CRLS meet the social/behavioral needs of students with disabilities.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	strongly disagree	0	0%
2	disagree	1	5%
3	neutral/undecided	5	25%
4	agree	11	55%
5	strongly agree	3	15%
	Total	20	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	2
Max Value	5
Mean	3.80
Variance	0.59
Standard Deviation	0.77
Total Responses	20

### 3. Special education programs/services at CRLS interfere with the academic achievement of students who do not have disabilities.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	strongly disagree	9	45%
2	disagree	6	30%
3	neutral/undecided	3	15%
4	agree	2	10%
5	strongly agree	0	0%
	Total	20	100%



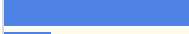

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	4
Mean	1.90
Variance	1.04
Standard Deviation	1.02
Total Responses	20

### 4. Special education programs/services at CRLS interfere with the social/behavioral development of students who do not have disabilities.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	strongly disagree	7	35%
2	disagree	8	40%
3	neutral/undecided	5	25%
4	agree	0	0%
5	strongly agree	0	0%
	Total	20	100%


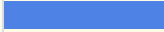


Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	3
Mean	1.90
Variance	0.62
Standard Deviation	0.79
Total Responses	20

## 5. General educators at CRLS are satisfied with special education programs and services.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	strongly disagree		0	0%
2	disagree		1	5%
3	neutral/undecided		9	45%
4	agree		8	40%
5	strongly agree		2	10%
	Total		20	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	2
Max Value	5
Mean	3.55
Variance	0.58
Standard Deviation	0.76
Total Responses	20

## 6. Special educators at CRLS are satisfied with special education programs and services.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	strongly disagree		0	0%
2	disagree		1	5%
3	neutral/undecided		7	35%
4	agree		11	55%
5	strongly agree		1	5%
	Total		20	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	2
Max Value	5
Mean	3.60
Variance	0.46
Standard Deviation	0.68
Total Responses	20

## 7. Paraprofessionals at CRLS are satisfied with special education programs and services.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	strongly disagree	0	0%
2	disagree	0	0%
3	neutral/undecided	12	60%
4	agree	6	30%
5	strongly agree	2	10%
	Total	20	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	3
Max Value	5
Mean	3.50
Variance	0.47
Standard Deviation	0.69
Total Responses	20

## 8. Related services staff members at CRLS are satisfied with special education programs and services.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	strongly disagree	0	0%
2	disagree	1	5%
3	neutral/undecided	12	60%
4	agree	5	25%
5	strongly agree	2	10%
	Total	20	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	2
Max Value	5
Mean	3.40
Variance	0.57
Standard Deviation	0.75
Total Responses	20

## 9. Co-teaching is effective in accomplishing the joint goals of curriculum access and the provision of special education services.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	strongly disagree	0	0%
2	disagree	2	11%
3	neutral/undecided	2	11%
4	agree	8	42%
5	strongly agree	7	37%
	Total	19	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	2
Max Value	5
Mean	4.05
Variance	0.94
Standard Deviation	0.97
Total Responses	19

## 10. RTI is functioning in a way that provides intensive intervention to possibly prevent the needs for special education services.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	strongly disagree	1	5%
2	disagree	1	5%
3	neutral/undecided	13	68%
4	agree	4	21%
5	strongly agree	0	0%
	Total	19	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	4
Mean	3.05
Variance	0.50
Standard Deviation	0.71
Total Responses	19

## 11. We need to make changes in our programs and services to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	strongly disagree	0	0%
2	disagree	0	0%
3	neutral/undecided	3	16%
4	agree	16	84%
5	strongly agree	0	0%
	Total	19	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	3
Max Value	4
Mean	3.84
Variance	0.14
Standard Deviation	0.37
Total Responses	19

## 12. My principal is supportive of special education programs and services at CRLS.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	strongly disagree	3	16%
2	disagree	3	16%
3	neutral/undecided	11	58%
4	agree	2	11%
5	strongly agree	0	0%
	Total	19	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	4
Mean	2.63
Variance	0.80
Standard Deviation	0.90
Total Responses	19



### 13. The district is supportive of special education programs and practices at CRLS.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	strongly disagree	0	0%
2	disagree	1	5%
3	neutral/undecided	8	42%
4	agree	9	47%
5	strongly agree	1	5%
	Total	19	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	2
Max Value	5
Mean	3.53
Variance	0.49
Standard Deviation	0.70
Total Responses	19

### 14. Parents are satisfied with special education services at CRLS.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	strongly disagree	0	0%
2	disagree	1	5%
3	neutral/undecided	6	32%
4	agree	12	63%
5	strongly agree	0	0%
	Total	19	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	2
Max Value	4
Mean	3.58
Variance	0.37
Standard Deviation	0.61
Total Responses	19

**15. CRLS is characterized by a strong collaborative culture.**

#	Answer		Response	%
1	strongly disagree		1	5%
2	disagree		2	11%
3	neutral/undecided		8	42%
4	agree		6	32%
5	strongly agree		2	11%
	Total		19	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	3.32
Variance	1.01
Standard Deviation	1.00
Total Responses	19

**Other Comments:**

**16. What other comments would you like to make about the past, present, or future of special education, related services, and inclusive practices at your school?**