

# RSU 9 Office of Special Services Board Report

8.13.24

Cynthia Bernstein, Director

---

## Student updates



In May, the Outdoor Class from Foster Tech presented an all terrain trike to the high school adaptive skills program! It was a wonderful, generous gift to help kids get out on the trails.

- ❖ 23 students with IEPs graduated with a diploma in June, 2024!
- ❖ Extended School Year (ESY- summer programming) has ended, including our new “summer semester” at Cushing Autism Program (5 hours/day, 23 day program). Busy kids, inside and outside, keeping skills going ahead of the fall.

---

## Program Updates

- ❖ Educational Programs Providing Medical Services
  - Day Treatment Programs:
    - Stepping Stones (K-2), Bridges (3-5), Ridges (6-8), Summit (9-12)
    - Provide Section 65 Day Treatment medical services-
      - counseling and service supervision by licensed counselor or social worker, and
      - intervention on mental health goals by behavioral health professionals (BHP).
  - Adaptive Skills Programs (K-12+):
    - Provide Section 28 Rehabilitative and Community Support (RCS) medical services-
      - consultation, coaching and service supervision by Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) or a teacher supervisor, and
      - intervention on functional and daily living skills by behavioral health professionals (BHP).
- ❖ Scaling up Section 28 services is underway.
  - Section 28 is a medical service that provides intervention addressing functional and adaptive goals such as functional communication, behavioral skills, and independent living and learning skills.
  - A contract has been established with the BCBA, and the teacher supervisor is in process. A general calendar of service start-up for 24-25 has been developed. Seeking approval for student eligibility is spaced out within programs to avoid all students requiring 90 day reviews at the same time. This would overwhelm staff with paperwork and team meetings, taking away from student time.

## Staff updates

- ❖ RSU 9 has 7 ed tech IIIs who have completed the no cost Eastern Maine Community College Learning Facilitation Program, alternate pathway to ed tech III certification via an intensive 9 month program that includes 350+ hours of direct work with students. Four more folks are currently enrolled. Investing in our staff is paying off for our students!
- ❖ New Staff and Open Positions
  - New to the Office of Special Services Administrative and Coordinator Team
    - Mike Hanson, Assistant Director of Special Services
    - Cory Emery, grade 6 - age 22 Special Services Coordinator
    - Cheryl Webster continues to be our pre-k-grade 5 Special Services Coordinator*
    - Nadine Fenderson, Clinical Coordinator

Staff	Location	Status
Day Treatment Teacher	Middle School	Candidate selected
2 Resource Room Teachers	Middle School	Advertising
1 Resource Room Teacher	Mallett Elementary	Advertising
Teacher Supervisor	District	Candidate selected
2 Ed Techs	Academy Hill	1 interviewing, 1 candidate selected
5 Ed Techs	CBS	4 interviewing, 1 candidate selected
3 Ed Techs	Cushing	1 candidate selected, 2 Long term subs in place
2 Ed Techs	High School	1 interviewing
1 Ed Tech	Mallett	Advertising
1 Ed Tech	Middle School	Long term sub in place

### Challenge:

It can be difficult to provide adequate assistance in programs given staff absences and open positions during 23-24. A schedule of coverage from one program to assist another wasn't as reliable as we had hoped given daily openings in each program.

### Solution:

Ed tech and teaching staff provided input last year on the challenges. An administrative workgroup looked at options and presented them to the leadership team. An open ed tech position in each building is advertised as a "permanent sub" using present special ed. funding to cover any special ed program in the building or assist in a partner building when needed. This position will not be attached to any special ed program in the building. We will take data on the reliability of this process and adjust as needed.

~~~~~

## Key Topics:

- ❖ Special Education Advisory Committee
  - Meeting schedule: October 8 ,2024, January 7, 2025, March 11, 2025, May 13, 2025 at 4:30pm
  - Topics for data gathering, analysis and recommendation.
    - Special Education Referral Patterns
- ❖ RSU 9 Identification Data and Patterns

|                | 2023-24 | 2022-23 | 2021-22 | 2020-21 | 2019-20 | 2018-19 | 2017-18 | 2016-17 | 2015-16 | 2014-15 |
|----------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| <b>ID rate</b> | 17.05   | 17.06   | 18      | 18.85   | 26.18   | *       | *       | 17.36   | 16.7    | 15.7    |

|                                     | ID rate RSU 9<br>(2024) | State ID rate<br>(2022) |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Autism</b>                       | <b>17.70%</b>           | <b>11.68%</b>           |
| <b>Emotional Disability (ED)</b>    | <b>10%</b>              | <b>7.20%</b>            |
| <b>Intellectual Disability (ID)</b> | <b>4%</b>               | <b>2.96%</b>            |
| <b>Multiple Disabilities</b>        | <b>8.60%</b>            | <b>7.96%</b>            |
| Other Health Impairment (OHI)       | 20%                     | 23.86%                  |
| Specific Learning Disability (SLD)  | 24%                     | 28.99%                  |
| Speech/Language Impairment (S/L)    | 14%                     | 15.80%                  |

*N<5 are left out of this data. Those categories include: orthopedic impairment, developmental delay, hard of hearing, deaf-blindness, traumatic brain injury, deafness, and visual impairment.*

| autism + OHI | autism + SLD | ED + SLD | ED + S/L | ID + Ortho | ID + S/L | OHI + S/L | OHI + SLD | <b>Total</b> |
|--------------|--------------|----------|----------|------------|----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| 12%          | 3%           | 9%       | 3%       | 3%         | 9%       | 21%       | 6%        | <b>57%</b>   |

- More than half our students with multiple differences are diverse in their cognitive, emotional, and/or social thinking skills.
- Our most concentrated areas of identification are with our students with the most diverse and intensive needs.
- Program and staff planning based on this data
  - Growing the Cushing Autism Program to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and beyond
  - Providing medical services within our educational program (Section 28 and Section 65, Speech/Language, OT, PT, potential for others)
- ❖ Professional Growth and Development Opportunities
  - Literacy Instruction: Director attended Phonics to Reading training and Literacy for Leaders to connect general education intervention strategies to the referral process.
  - Summer Training: Behavioral Health Professional, SafetyCare, CPR/First Aid
  - Fall Planning
    - All staff topic schedule:
      - Feedback for topic areas: executive functioning, increasing instructional and functional independence
      - Aligns with Multi Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS)
    - In classroom coaching from UMF professors

**Thank you for your support for Mt Blue students with learning differences!**