

PUPIL SERVICES

The Pupil Services Office oversees the services provided to students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and the support and services for homeless students. The Pupil Services Office works across all three schools in the district to hire, assign and supervise teachers, related service providers and instructional support personnel (Learning Assistants). Likewise, Pupil Services oversees the programming, instruction and evaluation of students with disabilities. The Pupil Services Office is also responsible for maintaining records for and reporting compliance with State and Federal standards for Special Education, Civil Rights, English Language Learners, Section 504 and Title IX.

Special Education

During the 2022-2023 school year, Harvard Public Schools provided specialized services to children with disabilities Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) to 162 students, which is approximately 15% of the total student population. This increase, consistent with the state and national trends, is increased from 11% for the 2021-2022 school year. The Pupil Services department is made up of a talented and dedicated group of professional staff members. This includes 13 special education teachers, 6 related service providers (occupational therapists, speech/language pathologists, school psychologists and school counselors) and a special education coordinator at each building. In addition, we have a number of

Learning Assistants to support students' access to the general curriculum. We have in-district services for a wide-range of disability profiles and educational needs. This includes two integrated preschool classrooms, our SAIL Program, specialized academic services and co-taught classes. Those students who cannot be served within our in-district programs attend specialized out of district placements. Harvard's out of district student population makes up approximately 17% of the total special education population. Special education staff continue to engage in a variety of professional growth experiences with a hope of increasing inclusive opportunities and improving outcomes for students with disabilities. Over the summer, several special education teachers were trained in the Wilson Reading System to support students with reading-based disabilities. This fall, special education staff in grades 6-12 participated in a co-teaching training and consultation. This work was dedicated to fostering the most effective inclusive opportunities for students with disabilities. In November, special education staff district-wide joined Littleton and Ayer-Shirley special educators for a LASH Learns presentation on the state's New Individualized Education Program (IEP) form that will be adopted state-wide in the fall of 2024. A smaller committee was established to apply what was learned to practices and processes within Harvard.

English Learner Education

Each fall, the district is responsible for screening new students whose home language is any language other than English. Harvard currently supports 34 students who are identified as an English Learner (EL). In addition to active ELs, we continue to monitor a number of students who are classified as Former English Learners (FELs). These children bring the richness of over 14 different home languages and hail from across the globe. In order to meet the needs of this increasingly-diverse and complex student population, the district added an additional EL Teacher for grades 6-12. In the last year, our district has increased connections with community groups, translation and interpretation programs, and explored opportunities to support families and students that require additional accommodations to participate in the activities at each of our schools. In addition, the town was awarded grant funding which was used to offer summer program and to secure necessary curricula and resources.

SEPAC

The Harvard Special Education Advisory Committee (SEPAC) continues to be an active community group. The Harvard SEPAC is a parent-led advisory group that provides feedback to the district on concerns, accomplishments and areas of focus related to special education. SEPAC provides opportunities for families and students to connect with each other through community-based activities. Local

SEPAC meetings are held on the 4th Thursday of each month. This year, the SEPAC continued to facilitate three seasons of adaptive sports (fall and spring soccer, and winter basketball) through a partnership with the local athletics association. Many of the volunteers for the programs offered were students and staff from our schools. In late winter/early spring, SEPAC collaborated with the Federation for Children with Special Needs to offer trainings for families including Understanding the IEP and Bullying: What Parents Need to Know. A spring social was held in June, which featured a petting zoo, ice cream truck, arts & crafts and a chance for SEPAC families to socialize! The SEPAC hosted a fall social event for families and students at Westward Orchards, with games, pumpkin painting, and a chance for families to socialize. In October, SEPAC facilitated a Basic Special Education Rights Workshop presented by the Federation for Children with Special Needs. The SEPAC recognized SEPAC Awareness Month in November, and contributed to the positive school culture by "lighting up" our buildings and town center. In December, SEPAC also partnered with the district to show a viewing of the documentary The Right to Read, which was followed by a panel Q&A regarding literacy instruction in Harvard. Parent voices are important to the continuous improvement and success of our work with students with disabilities. For more information about the Harvard SEPAC, please visit their website: <https://www.harvardsepac.com>

Respectfully Submitted,
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of Pupil Services