

Shrewsbury Public Schools

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FY '12 Budget Report for Special Education Presented January 2011

Introduction:

Shrewsbury Public Schools has a comprehensive program for students with disabilities. The school system subscribes to the philosophy that all students can learn and that the purpose of special education is to minimize the impact of disability and maximize the opportunities for children with disabilities to have access to the general curriculum.

It is the responsibility of the school district to provide every student with disabilities with a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) within the least restrictive environment (LRE) from ages 3 to 22. This age range is important because it significantly increases the amount of time that the school district is responsible for educating a student with special needs that must be factored into the overall cost of special education.

The Shrewsbury Public Schools are responsible for educating **906** (October 1, 2010 statistical report) students with disabilities both in the district and out of district. This represents **15.3%** of the district compared to the 2009/2010 State reporting of students in special education, which was **17.0%**.

State Reporting based on October 1 enrollment

	2009	2010
# of special education students	976	906
District % of students in special education	16.6	15.3
State % of students in special education	17.1	17.0

Based on current data there are **938** students receiving special education services. This number includes students after October 1, 2010 who have moved in to the district, students turning 3-years old, and those who have been evaluated and found eligible.

Initial Evaluation information from September 2010 through December 30, 2010

School	# of Initial Evaluations	# Students Not Eligible for Services	# Students Eligible for Special Education	# Evaluations still in process as of 12/23/10
Beal	4	1	2	1
Coolidge	14	2	5	7
Paton	15	4	5	6
Spring	7	1	2	4
Floral	3	1	2	0
Sherwood	6	4	1	1
Oak	1	1	0	0
High School	9	6	2	1
Total	59	20	19	20

Other than the costs related to the professional and support staff, the most costly aspects of the special education budget include out of district placement tuition, out of district transportation, extended year services and contracted services.

It is important to note, when discussing special education costs, that the federal legislation governing special education, IDEA or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, was originally mandated to fund 40% of the per pupil costs of educating all children with special needs. However, the federal funding contribution to local and state budgets for special education has consistently been approximately 18%, far below what is actually needed.

Equally as important, the state circuit breaker reimbursement formula has decreased significantly over the past three years. The legislation indicates a 75% reimbursement, subject to appropriation, for expenditures that exceed the foundation of \$37,767.77 (The Foundation amount has also increased in the past two years). However, only 40% reimbursement was awarded last year. We anticipate 40% reimbursement for 2012 as well.

Students Claimed	FY10 Claim Amount*	Foundation	Net Claim	40% Reimbursement
89	\$6,238,081	\$3,361,332	\$2,876,749	\$1,150,694

Students Served by Disability – Includes both in district and out of district

Disability	# of Students 09-10	# of Students 10-11
Autism	84	94
Communication	227	247
Developmental Delay (ages 3-9 only)	77	84
Emotional	35	40
Health	56	53
Intellectual (ages 9 and above)	18	16
Multiple Disabilities	35	28
Neurological	39	40
Physical	8	10
Sensory/Deaf/Blind	0	0
Sensory/Hard of Hearing or Deaf	11	9
Sensory/Vision Impairment or Blind	4	4
Specific Learning Disability	382	314
Total	976	939

Students Served in the District *

School	# of Students 09-10	# of Students 10-11
Parker Road Pre-school	63	72
Beal Pre-K	59	58
Calvin Coolidge Elementary	38	38
Floral Street School	103	97
Paton Elementary	36	41
Spring Street School	55	54
Sherwood Middle School	146	139
Oak Middle School	163	149
Shrewsbury High School	243	211
Total	906	859

- Includes students who receive walk-in special education services at primarily Parker Road Pre-School
- Does not include referrals from Early Intervention that will result in services for the remainder of the year.
- Does not include Out of District (see page 3)

Out of District Placements:

While the vast majority of students with special needs, 92%, are educated within Shrewsbury schools, there are a small percentage of students who need specialized programs including very small classes and a high teacher to student ratio. These students are educated out of district in either collaborative or private special education programs.

Children attend out of district programs as day or residential students depending on the severity of their disabilities. In addition, they may also attend for a longer year that includes a summer school component. A residential placement provides the student with twenty-four hour learning opportunities, full assistance with all functional life skills and intensive specialized developmental services. The children who attend residential programs do not make effective progress in day schools and often their safety awareness is severely limited, putting them at great risk.

The cost of out of district programs varies greatly. Tuition for private placements for the 2011-2012 school year have been projected to range from a high of \$378,773.75 (an increase by \$21,859.06 from last year, a 17% increase) which is for a residential program, to a low of \$26,250.00 (Collaborative program) for a day placement. The state of Massachusetts sets the tuition rates for these programs and, at times, will approve rate increases. Typically this increase can be between 3% and 4%. Thus far, for the 2010-11 school year the state has issued a freeze on tuition increases. However, schools were able to apply for extraordinary relief or restructuring and request a tuition increase. The total amount of tuition increases was \$40,462.80. The budget projected a 4% increase, which covered the actual increases granted by the state.

Currently, it is projected that there will be 78 students in out of district placements in the 2011-12 school year. This includes potential placements at the Assabet Valley Collaborative Middle School and High School for students experiencing emotional difficulties as well as students whose team has discussed the potential for out of district placement due to the significance of their disability and intensity of their services. This does not include students who are referred for a 45-day evaluation at the Collaborative. The intent of the 45-day evaluation is to gather more information about a student's behavior and disability that has significantly impacted their ability to make effective progress.

The goal is for these students to return to their middle or high school with strengthened support so they can succeed. However, there are times when a student's disability is such that they require a more intensive program and may be referred for an out of district placement either at the Collaborative or at a private school.

Students Served Out Of District for Fiscal Year '09-10' and '10-11'

Out of District Placement	# of Students 09-10	# of Students 10-11 as of 1/11
Elementary	16	14
Middle School	16	18
Collaborative Middle School	1	3
High School	20	27
Collaborative High School	7	6
Post Graduate High School	10	8
Post Graduate Collaborative H.S.	1	0
Transition Program	5	4
Total	76	80*

* Includes the 4 students enrolled in the Collaborative Transition Program

The Assabet Valley Collaborative started a 45-day (middle and high school aged) evaluation program for students who were experiencing significant emotional, behavioral, and mental health issues. Two students have accessed this program thus far in 2010-2011.

Tuition ranges currently in fiscal year '11 and projected for '12

Fiscal Year	Total # of Students	Day School tuition range	Residential Tuition Range
10-11	80 (63 day, 16 residential)	\$26,250 to \$92,291	\$150,759 to \$352,481
11-12	78 projected (63 day, 15 residential)	\$26,250 to \$95,772	\$127,482 to \$378,773

Net Appropriation

	FY11 Budget	FY12 Budget	Difference
Out-of-district Tuition	\$6,134,122	\$6,117,781	(\$16,341)
Less Circuit Breaker Reimbursement	\$1,004,829	\$1,150,700	\$145,870
Net Appropriation	\$5,129,293	\$4,967,081	(\$162,212)

Projected range of costs for Out of District programming based on Disability Category

Disability	Out of District (projected range per student)
SLD (Specific Learning Disability)	Learning Prep: \$32,878.28 Landmark: \$21,039.70 to \$58,605.85 Willow Hill: \$48,174.01 White Oak: \$33,546.86
Autism	NECC Day: \$95,772.55 NECC Res.: \$200,210.84 to \$285,548.99 Boston Higashi: \$175,353.35 Nashoba Learning: \$96,937.75
Communication	No placements for communication
Developmental Delay (up to age 9) And Intellectual (ages 9 and up)	Kennedy Day Center: \$71,975.38 LABBB: \$63,568.54 Mercy Center: \$65,452.28 Learning Clinic: \$127,482.33 (residential) Evergreen: \$155,203.87 (residential) Riverview: \$67,968.83 (residential) Protestant Guild: \$56,734.56 (Residential ½ year cost shared) Cotting School: \$76,850.90
Emotional	Collaborative: \$39,253.30 Reed: \$69,615.79 Dr. Franklin Perkins: \$60,009.76 Dr. Franklin Perkins Res: \$185,738.28 Walker: \$71,680.85 Wayside Academy: \$48,500.36 McGrath Educational Center: \$35,421.04 Victor School: \$50,038.03 Cottage Hill: State pays Dearborn Academy: \$59,376.24 Seven Hills: \$22,256.10
Health	No placements for health
Neurological	May Nero-Rehab: \$217,909.07 (residential)
Multiple	Crotched Mountain: \$378,773.75 (residential) Cotting School: \$76,850.90
Physical	No placements for physical
Sensory Vision	Perkins School for the Blind: \$127,657.02
Sensory Hearing	Learning Center for the Deaf: \$41,700.38 to \$71,149.68

Important considerations for increase in the Out of District Placements:

1. Increase in Crotched Mountain of \$21,859.06 for one tuition for FY 11
2. Placements for students with significant challenges and emotional needs.
3. Students who moved in during the year and full tuitions were assumed for FY 11:
 - a. \$ 37,456 (pre-school student moved in mid-year and required placement) full tuition assumed for FY 12 is \$71,149.68
 - b. \$71,149.68
 - c. \$39,253.30
 - d. \$60,800.50
 - e. \$246,848.35
 - f. \$121,579.14
 - g. \$71,879.01
 - h. \$26,015.29
 - i. \$35,000.00
 - j. \$10,773.00

Total move-in liability between FY 2010 and 2011: \$ 720,752

Out of District Transportation:

In addition to tuition, transportation costs are a significant budget item related to out of district placements. Shrewsbury is part of a consortium of school districts working through the Assabet Valley Collaborative to manage transportation costs. Wherever possible, students from Shrewsbury are transported with students from surrounding towns who attend the same day programs. It is important to note, however, that few of these educational programs are located in central Massachusetts. Most are located in the metro-Boston area, which substantially increases transportation costs. The state does not provide any reimbursement for out of district transportation.

	FY11 Budget	FY12 Budget	Difference
Out-of-district Transportation	\$928,000	\$1,067,200	\$139,200

Extended Year Services:

There are two standards for determining extended year services or summer programming for students with disabilities. One is the severity of the child’s disability and the other is “substantial regression.” This means that if a student is likely to lose critical skills or fail to recover these skills within a reasonable amount of time compared to typical students, summer programs are required. The decision to provide extended year services is made by the TEAM at the student’s annual IEP review.

Students on the autism spectrum as well as other students with significant disabilities attend the full day summer program while students with other special education needs may attend the half-day program.

The program must be fully staffed with teachers, ABA technicians and aides and transportation must be provided for students.

	FY11 Budget	FY12 Budget	Difference
Extended Year Services	\$318,887	\$334,831	\$15,944

Contracted Services:

There are a variety of mandated special education services for which we must hire outside contractors. Many of these involve low incidence disabilities. Some examples of contracted services include aural rehabilitation, sign language interpretation, translation of documents into parents’ native language, blind-vision therapy, music therapy, mobility specialist, Wilson reading tutoring, and independent evaluations.

	FY11 Budget	FY12 Budget	Difference
Contracted Services	\$330,000	\$369,000	\$39,000 *

* Includes adding psychiatric consultation, assumed 1 Wilson Tutoring position from appropriated staff and includes home service contract for nine students.

FY 12 Requests

Changes to the Special Education Program for FY 12	Justification
.5 Clinical Coordinator	The district hired a Clinical Coordinator in January 2009. Over the past two years, there has been an increase of students on the Autism Spectrum who are receiving their services in the district as well as a significant rise in students experiencing mental health issues. The Clinical Coordinator provides support to nine schools across the district. He conducts Functional Behavior Assessments, develops behavior support plans, consults to special education teams, provides parent consultation and services, works directly with students, develops teaching plans, and more recently provides support to regular education students and staff following the District’s RTI model. He also coordinates and co-treats with the consulting psychiatrist on a weekly basis. In the past, outside consultants would be contracted to provide these services. The district has not hired an outside consultant since this position started. Due to the increase in needs across the district, there is a need to provide additional clinical support.

FY 12 Requests Continued

<p>Changes to the Special Education Program for FY 12</p>	<p>Justification</p>
<p>1.0 ELC Coordinator for Floral Street</p>	<p>The ELC program supports students on the Autism Spectrum who require intensive instruction outside of the general education classroom and who also require behavioral support. We currently have ELC programs at Beal, Spring, and Floral Street. This program prevents students from going to costly out of district programs. The typical caseload for an ELC Coordinator is 7 to 8 students. Floral Street currently has 10 students this year and will have 15 students next year. In order to support these students effectively, another ELC Coordinator is required.</p>
<p>.4 School Psychologist (.2 Beal and .2 Spring)</p>	<p>In 2009 we piloted a Team Chair and School Psychologist model that utilized existing FTE's, but separated the roles of Team Chair and School Psychologist. We initially had 1.0 Team Chair supporting both Spring and Beal and a 1.0 School Psychologist supporting both schools. This year, we hired 2 psychologists at .6, one for each school. With the increase in mental health issues and our goal to implement RTI practices, there is a greater need for the school psychologists.</p>
<p>1.0 Special Education Teacher – Coolidge new program (Budget Neutral)</p>	<p>The district is proposing an intensive special needs classroom to be housed at Coolidge Elementary. These students participated in the intensive special needs classroom at Parker Road Preschool and require intensive instruction and support. The program would include five students, a special education teacher, and 2 instructional aides. The Special Education teacher will come from within the existing budget. Due to the significance of these students' disabilities, they are at greater risk for out of district placements. This program would prevent the potential for an out of district placement.</p>

FY 12 Requests Continued

Changes to the Special Education Program for FY 12	Justification
.25 Special Education Secretary	There is an opportunity to apply for additional Medicaid reimbursement from students who are in out of district placements. The procedure for reimbursement is different than our current method of documenting and billing for services. The additional support will be able to serve in this capacity as well as support other office needs related to compliance such as managing student records and managing 504 records.
3.0 Aides/Techs	Three students moved into the district this year that require aide/tech support.

Programs continued and implemented in 2010-2011 that mitigated costs to the district:

Co-Taught Teaching Model

Co-Taught (grade 2 and 4): The Floral co-taught program began in the first grade and looped to second grade this year. In addition, with creative scheduling a fourth grade co-taught program was added. Both programs operate across two classrooms, with two general education teachers and a special educator forming a co-teaching team; this team is supported by a full-time special education paraprofessional as well. Identified students are placed in each classroom; common instructional space and flexible grouping is used in order to maintain cohesiveness and appropriate levels of service.

Co-Taught (grade 5 and 6): Students who were at risk and presented a similar profile to students with Language Based Learning Disabilities were identified for this program to prevent out of district placement. Students are placed on a two-person team with two regular education teachers, one special education teacher and a paraprofessional. A sixth grade program was added this year with creative scheduling of staff. The same principles of co-teaching methodologies apply as stated in the Floral Street program.

Mobile On Site Vocational Education (M.O.V.E) 9-12: The high school students in Project M.O.V.E. have been recommended through the TEAM process and attend classes at the high school for part of the day and then attend the M.O.V.E. program for the remainder of the day. These students typically need direction in the areas of social/personal behavior, classroom achievement and/or appropriate attendance levels. M.O.V.E. is an alternative vocational training program and it is a site-based training in the food trade area. The primary goal is to help students gain vocational skills and develop appropriate work behaviors to better equip them for the world of work.

Clinical Programming

The clinical coordinator is a full time Master's level Behavior Analyst who works across the district. This role supports students in regular education and special education requiring clinical services and support. The clinical coordinator's primary responsibility in regular education is to assist the classroom teacher identify students who may be engaging in challenging behaviors that interfere with learning, conduct a Functional Behavior Assessment, develop Positive Behavior Support Plans, train staff to implement the plans, and follow-up when needed. The primary responsibility in special education is to develop procedural consistencies, develop accountability and reliability procedures, supervise home support programs, consult to district wide programs, and provide professional development.

Psychiatric Consultation

There has been a substantial increase in students with mental health issues and this continues to rise. In order to minimize out of district evaluations and placement, a psychiatrist was hired to consult across the district 4 hours weekly. The psychiatrist works with the clinical coordinator to provide clinical rounds at the schools across the district based on referrals from the schools. To date, the psychiatrist has consulted on 38 cases. She has been instrumental in assisting parents obtain outside medical attention and services as well as provided valuable recommendations to support these students in their school program.

SOLVE Training: Strategies of Limiting Violent Episodes (S.O.L.V.E) is a 20-hour program teaching staff various methods to prevent aggression from occurring through verbal and environmental options to control aggression safely and through physical options within the context of treatment. The clinical coordinator and three ELC Coordinators are certified as trainers for the district. They provide minimally two courses each year as well as an annual recertification for staff who have been certified.

Summer Social Skills Program: The Social Skills Summer Program is a four-week program designed for children who have been receiving direct special education services in social/pragmatic skills over the course of the regular school year. The goal of the program is to maintain the skills that the child has learned throughout the school year and prevent substantial regression of those skills during the summer. The program provided the necessary environment to facilitate use and maintenance of skills, through both structured and unstructured activities that require such skills as cooperation, perspective taking, negotiation, and social problem solving. This past summer, we introduced typical peers to the program. This was a great success and provided a rich program for students to learn and generalize skills with their typical peers.

Additional Expenses Related to Special Education:

Other important budgetary items for FY12 include:

	<u>FY 11</u>	<u>FY12</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Legal fees	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$0
Translator/Interpreter	\$9,000	\$8,000	(\$1,000)
Home/hospital tutoring	\$15,000	\$10,000	(\$5,000)
Testing supplies	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$0
Instructional materials	\$6,000	\$0	(\$6,000) use 240 grant
Evaluations	\$9,000	\$4,000	(\$5,000) doing less outside

Legal fees: The state and federal laws governing special education are extensive and even, at times, contradictory. In addition, sometimes, despite our best efforts, the school system must go to hearings through the Bureau of Special Education Appeals and this requires full legal representation.

Home/hospital tutoring: When a student is absent for more than 14 consecutive school days due to illness, the school department must provide tutorial services for the child. We have reallocated 50% of this to Pupil Personnel as many students who are not receiving special education services may require tutoring due to an illness or injury.

Testing supplies: These include all of the assessment tools that are used by the special education staff for initial and on-going evaluations of students with disabilities. Once a testing battery is obsolete, there is only a two-year window where it must be replaced.

Technology and instructional materials: In the current school year, all technology needs, including assistive technology and audiological equipment, were paid through a federal grant. We plan to fund special education technology through federal grant sources in FY '12.

Conclusion:

Shrewsbury Public Schools has made a strong commitment to the education of children with disabilities. An exceptional staff that is highly qualified in education and expertise and cares deeply about students provides the special education services. Most of these children are being educated in programs in town where they are able to be part of their school community. The request for additional funds for special education will allow us to continue to meet all of the state and federal mandates and provide a quality education for our students with special needs.

Comparison of SPS to Area Towns Based on FY '09:

The source of these two charts was the DOE website based on fiscal year '09:

<http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/statistics/>

Town	Collaborative Spending	Private School Spending	Total SPED Expenses	Net School Spending	% of Total Budget
Marlboro	672,375	5,797,689	17,189,354	59,528,585	28.9
Southborough	68,936	2,138,503	4,978,269	19,003,295	26.2
Berlin	20,956	96,776	753,834	3,024,510	24.9
Boylston	37,885	70,500	725,605	3,945,181	18.4
Berlin-Boylston	400,727	346,757	1,305,290	5,410,300	24.1
Maynard	209,121	602,307	3,229,871	14,528,053	22.2
Hudson	301,749	920,824	6,714,941	30,645,215	21.9
Westborough	1,066,013	1,359,835	8,144,280	43,317,894	18.8
Nashoba	484,619	706,596	6,516,026	36,320,128	17.9
Northborough	110,612	988,806	3,814,057	20,517,797	18.6
Statewide	224,227,262	417,417,645	2,056,627,379	10,246,451,869	20.1
Shrewsbury	619,963	4,194,338	13,475,4832	52,583,507	25.6

Comparison of SPS to Similar Towns Based on FY '09:

These comparisons show similar districts on the basis of district structure, wealth and enrollment.

Town	Collaborative Spending	Private school Spending	Total SPED Expenses	Net School Spending	% of Total Budget
Barnstable	1,317,337	3,994,384	11,191,818	62,373,004	17.9
Billerica	2,264,282	2,439,329	13,026,992	65,553,339	19.9
Braintree	2,000,267	2,545,713	12,126,731	50,475,503	24.0
Cambridge	2,145,997	8,850,315	27,575,863	144,053,516	19.1
Chelmsford	2,762,959	3,830,914	9,038,096	56,564,000	16.0
Franklin	1,628,777	2,339,718	12,812,046	56,323,253	22.7
Mansfield	569,015	1,215,627	8,678,571	41,599,724	20.9
Peabody	111,378	4,184,219	11,864,080	62,801,693	18.9
Waltham	1,128,641	3,649,597	14,607,811	80,942,573	18.0
Bridgewater/Raynham	2,427,720	3,736,786	12,245,112	51,653,917	23.7
Statewide	224,227,262	417,417,645	2,056,627,379	10,246,451,869	20.1
Shrewsbury	619,963	4,194,338	13,475,4832	52,583,507	25.6

Shrewsbury's Direct Special Education Expenditures as a Percentage of School Budget, FY00 to FY09

Fiscal Year	A -- In-District Instruction--		C - Out-of-District Tuition - Mass. Public Schools and Collaboratives		D Mass Private and Out-of-State Schools	E Combined Special Ed Expenditures (A+B+C+D)	F Total School Operating Budget	G Special Education Percentage of Budget (E as % of F)	H state average percentage
	Teaching	Other Instructional							
2000	2,649,992	689,240	240,539	770,047	4,349,818	28,762,594	15.1	16.9	
2001	2,698,520	783,422	227,632	571,190	4,280,764	31,199,717	13.7	17.2	
2002	3,610,178	866,760	173,886	784,719	5,435,543	33,143,729	16.4	17.4	
2003	3,359,492	1,127,412	231,026	897,974	5,615,904	36,101,586	15.6	17.7	
2004	4,047,224	1,151,063	359,291	1,585,313	7,142,891	39,991,000	17.9	18.6	
2005	4,653,632	1,210,379	248,700	2,035,770	8,148,481	44,057,313	18.5	18.9	
2006	4,720,496	1,356,240	303,891	2,401,514	8,782,141	45,457,192	19.3	19.1	
2007	5,208,100	976,842	348,552	2,836,586	9,370,080	47,100,297	19.9	19.4	
2008	6,477,828	1,123,232	518,254	3,477,571	11,596,885	51,696,448	22.4	19.8	
2009	7,342,907	1,318,275	619,963	4,194,338	13,475,483	52,583,507	25.6	20.0	

Notes and Definitions

Source: End of Year Pupil and Financial Report, Schedule 4 - Special Education Expenditures by Prototype

Special Education Expenditures

"Direct" special education expenditures include only those that can be related specifically to special education pupils.

"Other instructional" includes supervisory, textbooks and instructional equipment, guidance, and psychological services.

"Mass. Public Schools and Collaboratives" includes other public school districts, collaboratives, and charter schools.

Thru FY03, "Mass. Private and Out-of-State Schools" includes only the local share of residential programs (50 percent of the cost was paid directly to those schools by the Commonwealth). Beginning in FY04, the 50 percent reimbursement was replaced by the circuit-breaker program, which reimburses the districts directly. The tuition shown in this column now represents 100 percent of the district cost.

Spending from state "circuit breaker" funds is included. Otherwise, spending from grants, revolving funds, or other non-appropriated revenue sources (totalling less than 4 percent of total special ed spending statewide) is excluded.

Total School Expenditures

Through FY03, "Total School Operating Budget" equals Chapter 70 actual "Net School Spending". Beginning in FY04, circuit-breaker revenues are added to the net school spending amount because the circuit-breaker program is included in the special education columns, but not in net school spending.

Operating budget includes municipal indirect spending for schools but excludes capital expenditures and transportation.

Other than circuitbreaker spending, operating budget does not include expenditures from grants, revolving funds, or other non-appropriated revenue sources.