

PSB Panel 1, Group 2: Supporting Diverse Learners

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7/30/20

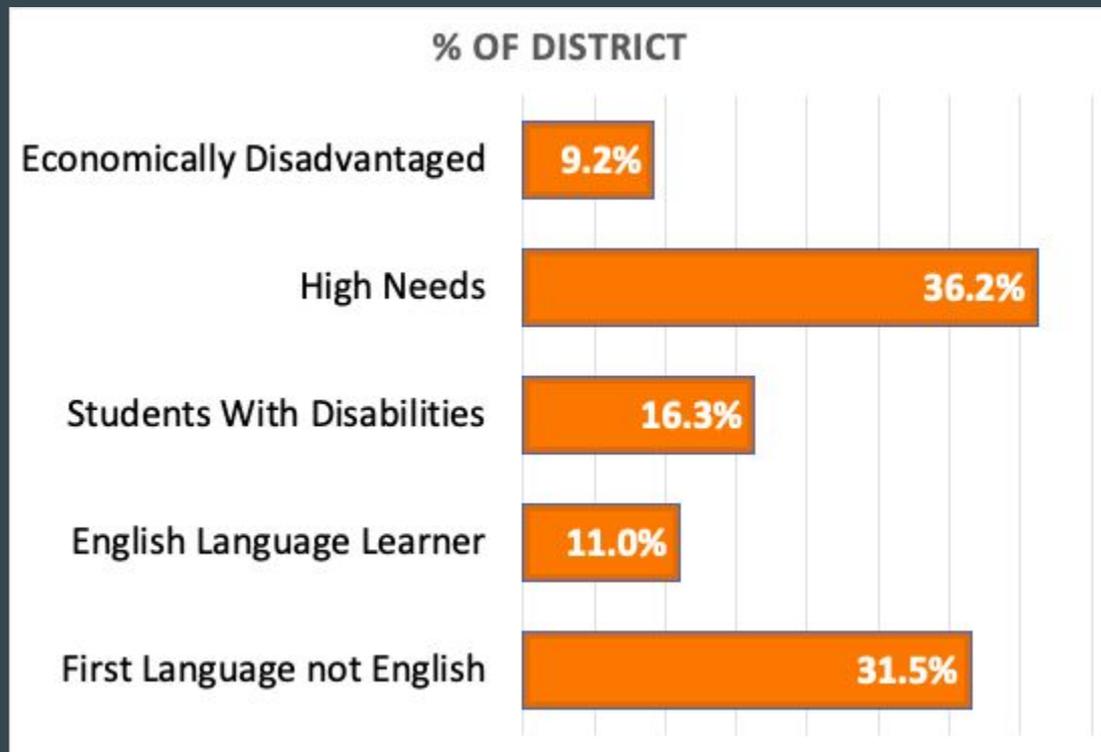
Problem of Practice

PSB will need to differentiate remote learning to maximize engagement for students who need documented interventions. This area will focus on the organizational structures and supports needed to facilitate accommodations and modifications that may be needed in a virtual and/ or hybrid learning environment for EL students, vulnerable populations, and those on IEPs or 504 plans.

Overview

- Universal Recommendations to Support Equity and Access for Students with Identified Needs
- Recommendations Specific to Students with IEPs
- Recommendations Specific to English Learners
- Recommendations Specific to Underserved Populations
- Recommendations Specific to Inclusion
- Recommendations Specific to In-Person Instruction
- Appendix: Slides with Additional Detail Related to Recommendations

Data Summary



Overarching Recommendations

- Make data-based decisions
- Coordinate and address students' growing academic, economic, social, and emotional needs by expanding screening, mapping the availability of local services, and integrating student supports.
- Support high quality family engagement
- Use equity framework

Universal Recommendations to Support Equity and Access for Students with Identified Needs

Proactively Provide Targeted, Individualized Support

- Use existing systems and create new ones (as needed) to identify and support children with identified needs or those at risk of significant learning loss.
- Use Student Support Teams to meet regularly to discuss students with the most intensive needs
- Consider offering expanded learning opportunities for students with identified needs
- Coordinate and address students' growing academic, economic, social, and emotional needs by expanding screening, mapping the availability of local services, and integrating student supports.

Data-Based Decision Making

- Use child, family, classroom, school and district-wide data for planning and targeting resources to students who are most in need.
- Per the DESE guidance, prioritize in-person services and schooling for students with disabilities and those with the most intensive learning and behavioral needs while also factoring in their health and safety.
- Alter existing family and student data collection efforts to include items rating the accessibility and equity of services families and students are receiving during the pandemic.

Continue Supporting Staff Development in High Quality Family Engagement

- Promote and support culturally competent personnel who understand, value, and integrate family beliefs and culture into distance service delivery that fits into the daily routines and activities of families
- Encourage and support flexible, responsive practices and service delivery to meet the evolving needs of families and children during different stages of the pandemic

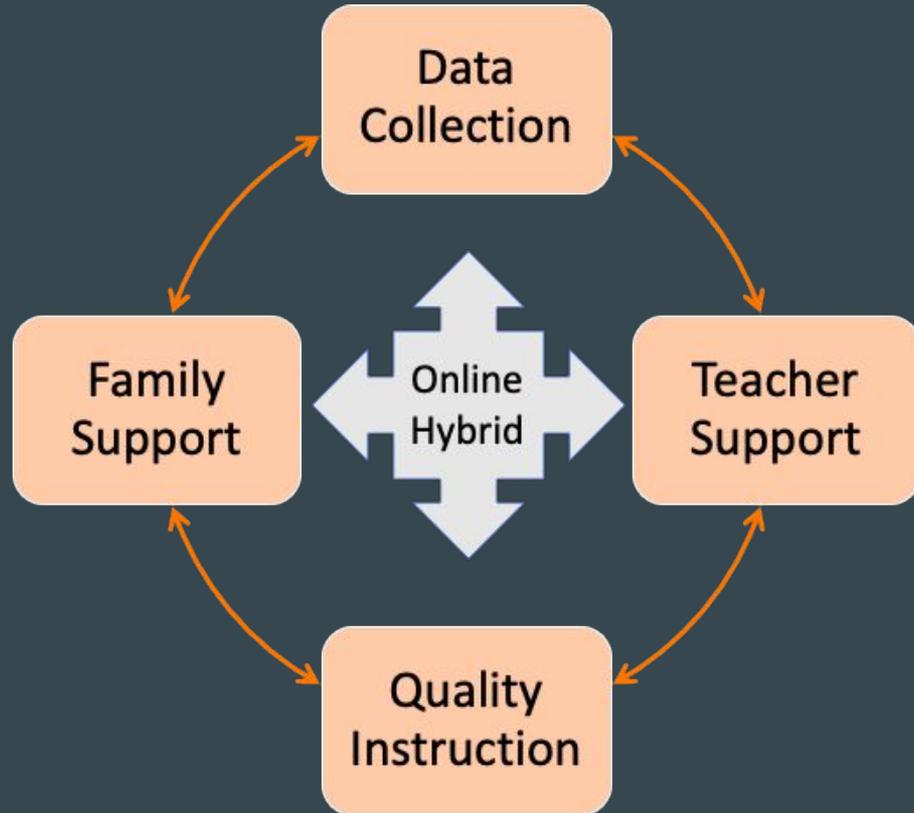
Consider the Equity of Fiscal Policies

- Distribute resources equitably among schools within the district. Per-pupil allocations of emergency-response funds should be greater in schools serving high concentrations of students from low-income backgrounds and other underserved populations in comparison to those with lower proportions of those students within the district.
- Target funds to students disproportionately affected by the pandemic, including students with disabilities, English learners (ELs), and students experiencing homelessness.
- Target funds to community-based organizations with a proven track record of serving vulnerable populations like communities of color, immigrant communities, and the families of ELs
- Address policies and procedures creating barriers to ensuring children are receiving necessary services including equity of access and inclusion opportunities with same age peers

Information in this Section Adapted From:

- [Recommendations for Prioritizing Equity in the Response to COVID-19 - Alliance for Excellent Education](#)
- [Rennie Center - Accessing Essential Services](#)
- [Equitably Serving Children with Disabilities and their Families during Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Council for Exceptional Children Key Considerations for Special Educators and the Infants, Children, and Youth They Serve as Schools Reopen](#)

Overall Process



Recommendations Specific to Students with IEPs

Teacher Support and Development

- Protect and prioritize special educators and their teams
- Protect existing resources and personnel by maintaining existing jobs and avoiding expanded caseloads
- Provide coaching and PD specific to virtual instruction and service delivery for SWDs
 - Consider virtual coaching
- Provide additional curriculum planning time for teachers
- Develop plans for holding IEP and 504 meetings virtually

Testing

- Types of assessments
 - KG screeners (including ChildFind)
 - Special education evaluation
 - Progress monitoring
 - Qualitative assessments
- Identify reliability issues with online administration of assessments
 - E.g., Sound quality and audability, distractions, motivational issues, paper-pencil
- Opportunity to transition to digital assessments
 - Adaptive
 - Efficient
 - Standardized
 - Interactive
- Provide families results of assessments and identify a person of contact for interpretation

Instruction and Delivery

- Review content used across PSB and identify opportunities for alignment and consistency across schools
- Identify crucial components of the curriculum to prioritize (Marie Kondo-ing priorities)
- Consider how best to deliver those components based on student's IEPs
- Develop a school-based staffing plan to discuss each child and develop individualized support plans
- Create Student-specific plans for students not eligible for IEPs or 504s but who need more individualized supports and monitor their implementation

Family Support

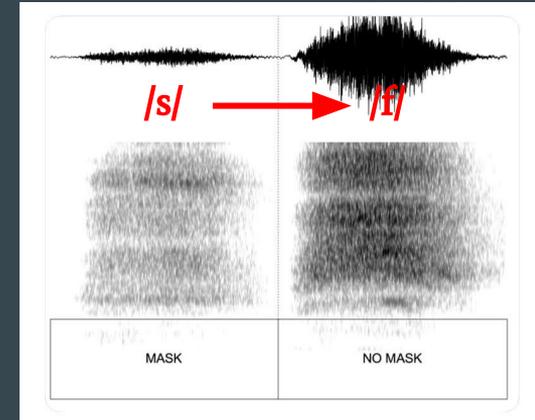
- Provide families with information, specific tips, and ongoing support for promoting their child's organization, productivity, behavior, and attention during online learning
 - Examples: Organizational structures that can be done at home (i.e., agendas, visual schedule), prompting self-advocacy and using coping strategies, schedule movement/exercise breaks, provide positive feedback
- Make recommendations through different modalities: written, video, consultation
- Align IEP accommodations with home-based remote learning interventions through a consultative model

Challenges for In-Person Learning

Masks prevent visibility of a person's mouth and processing of visual cues for language comprehension, attention, and learning. Particularly relevant for:

- Very young children (Pre-K-2)
- Beginning readers and struggling readers working to develop explicit awareness of individual speech sounds
- Students with Developmental Language Disorder
- English Language Learners
- Students with attention deficits

Many students require or benefit from the opportunity to move and engage in light physical activity throughout the day



Challenges for In-Person Learning

Recommendations:

- Explicitly acknowledge and discuss with all children the challenge of communicating while wearing masks. Encourage awareness, patience, and persistence.
- Consider masks with clear panels
- Be proactive. Plan for ways to provide structured movement breaks in the classroom that can be implemented in a safe, distanced way
- Identify a designated area where students can go or specific activity they can engage in when they feel the need a movement break

Other Considerations

Transition Planning

- Secondary transition planning process
- Students aged 18-22 on IEPs
- Transitions from Part C Early Intervention to Part B Public Preschool Special Education

Information in this Section Adapted From:

- [NCLD](#)
- [Equitably Serving Children with Disabilities and their Families during Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Council of Administrators of Special Education COVID-19 Considerations](#)
- [Screening Chart](#)
- [DESE guidelines for screeners](#)

Recommendations Specific to English Learners (ELs)

Teacher Support and Development

- Curriculum adaptation
 - Review current curriculum
 - Adapt directions (simplify language, add visual cues)
 - Adapt content (replace or supplemental--like embedding videos)
 - Adapt student output (simplify language, add examples, provide several options)
 - Find resources that work
- Provide materials translation support
- Collaborations with general education teachers with facilitating access to the general education curriculum adapted to online learning

Testing

- Reliable and valid online assessments for EL students (screening, progress monitoring)
- For EL identification:
 - Step 1: Administer the home language survey (HLS) to all newly enrolling students.
 - Step 2: Conduct an interview remotely with the student (phone, Skype, Zoom, etc.) when the answer to any of the questions on the HLS is a language other than English. Follow the procedures below and complete the speaking, listening and interaction rubrics in Appendix.
 - Step 3: Determine whether the student might be an EL using student interview results and make a provisional placement decision.
 - Step 4: Notify parents and/or legal guardians of screening test results and provisional placement decisions.
 - Step 5: DO NOT code the student as an EL in before you administer a language proficiency screening test.
- Other educational needs
 - Assessments to be conducted in English and native language
- Online delivery allows for dynamic assessments that are robust for EL
 - E.g., learning process rather than static knowledge

Instruction

- Comprehensible input: Provide multiple visual and auditory cues for learning
- Affective filter: create optimal affective conditions for learning (high motivation, high confidence, low anxiety)
 - Use interactive and engaging technology
- Four language modalities for learning and practice (reading, listening, speaking, and writing)
 - Optimize synchronous instruction to increase opportunities for speaking, ask children to upload verbal response, and form conversational pods.
- Leverage of home language
 - Which instructional materials need translating

Family Support

- Parent support in parent's native language:
 - E.g., an app that allows teachers to write a text message in English and the message is translated into one of 100 languages for families according to their native language
- Cultural liaisons or community members may be able to provide important guidance on communication
- District-based native language liaison
 - the language and culture of the families
 - technical school terms, especially for special education
 - strategies that can help build trust and community among ELs and their families.
- Encourage parents to make connection

Information in this Section Adapted From:

- [Teaching Matters](#)
- [Colorín Colorado](#)
- [WIDA](#)
- <http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/ele/>

Recommendations Specific to Underserved Populations

Consider Additional Engagement and Outreach

- Identify one or more persons in each school who is responsible for connecting with underserved families and who is familiar with the variety of ways to connect with families including phone calls, letters, and socially distanced home visiting.
- Ensure that multiple methods of outreach are used for school communications and that they are accessible for all families. Considerations include: family literacy level, access to/familiarity with technology, language needs, and others.
- Identify which families are not engaging in opportunities for feedback on and input into hybrid and/or virtual instruction and design and implement strategies to specifically solicit feedback from those families.
- Incorporate opportunities for families to provide input on their overall well-being and needs as part of outreach activities.

Connections to PSB and Community Resources and Services

- Create an asset map of community resources aligned to families' needs and priorities that is available electronically and in print. Include key information about each resource such as contact information, a contact name location, and eligibility criteria.
 - Identify supports available to meet the diverse home language needs of children and their families
- Create a system to track services once a community referral is made.
- Ensure that students who rely on school meals continue to receive them, even if in-person instruction does not resume fully.
 - Consider universal access to free lunches given the financial instability of some families during the pandemic
- Ensure that teachers are provided with trauma informed training and implicit bias training so they do not confuse behavior issues with academic issues.

Access to Technology and Other Learning Aids

- Purchase and distribute connectivity and computer hardware necessary for all students to participate in remote instruction while prioritizing purchases for which there is greater long-term potential for use.
 - Consider the inaccessibility of chromebooks for SWDs
- Identify needs and provide access to other resources that allow online and synchronous communication such as cellular data plans and internet hotspots for families
- Increase access to internet broadband or wi-fi including the Lifeline program through the Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
- Ensure remote learning is accessible for all students, including ELs and those with disabilities.

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Inclusion Framework in a Hybrid Learning Environment

PSB & Inclusion

Inclusion is a district philosophy of Brookline Public Schools focused on educating each student to the maximum extent appropriate within the least restrictive environment while acknowledging the need for a continuum of specially designed instruction, supports, services, and placements. All students within Brookline have a right to a challenging education enabling them to make effective educational progress alongside their peers.

Specially designed instruction and related services are provided within the general education setting with the use of supplementary aids and services whenever appropriate with the constant goal being that each student will demonstrate effective educational progress. The philosophy of inclusion is supported within the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004 that requires students with disabilities to be educated in the “least restrictive environment” appropriate to meet their “unique needs” while identifying the need for a continuum of placement options.

Within the Public Schools of Brookline successful inclusion depends on each educator’s responsiveness to individual student needs within flexible learning environments. *The need for flexibility within instructional presentations, curriculum materials and demonstrations of student achievement is recognized. Practices and procedures support high expectations for individual achievement and acknowledge that best practice for students with disabilities benefits all students. A continuum of services is available in each school and throughout the district where general education teachers and special educators share responsibility for all students.*

Considerations

- When considering which cohorts of students are prioritized for in-person instruction keep in mind that learning needs to take place in the least restrictive environment and alongside peers
 - Student cohorts should include diverse groups of learners
- Make sure remote class meetings times are scheduled when students with and without IEPs are able to attend together
 - General education and special education teachers coordinate on scheduling
- Continue to offer push-in services and small group offerings (e.g., “lunch bunch”) in the hybrid environment where children with and without IEPs can learn and socialize together.

Appendix: Slides with Additional Detail Regarding Recommendations

Detailed Universal Recommendations to Support Equity and Access for Students with Identified Needs

Proactively Provide Targeted, Individualized Support

- Learning loss general screeners
 - Curriculum specific (e.g., specific benchmark assessments)
 - Teacher developed
- Develop a school-based staffing plan to discuss each child and develop individualized support plans that incorporate alternative strategies as needed to meet children's needs
- Use Student Support Teams to meet regularly to discuss students with the most intensive needs
- Create student-specific plans for students not eligible for IEPs or 504s but who need more individualized supports and monitor their implementation
- Consider offering expanded learning opportunities for students with identified needs
- Increase access to tele-intervention and synchronous learning for children and families with identified needs
- Based on an understanding of the strengths and needs of each child, identify whole-school improvements that need to be implemented

Data-Based Decision Making

- Provide student-level information from fall 2020 diagnostic assessments to families, educators, and school leaders as soon as possible.
- Aggregate information from diagnostic assessments for decision-makers so that school- and district-level data can be used for planning and targeting resources to students who are most in need.
- Use data to consider how PSB is ensuring equity for all students. Are reopening plans designed to include ALL children in planning and implementation discussions and initiatives, including those with the most extensive needs?
- Per the DESE guidance, prioritize in-person services and schooling for students with disabilities and those with the most intensive learning and behavioral needs while also factoring in their health and safety

Data-Based Decision Making (cont.)

- Alter existing family data collection efforts to include items rating the accessibility and equity of services families received during the pandemic
- Collect and analyze data to more clearly understand families' participation in distance learning and service delivery across multiple variables (e.g., race, income, location)
- Adapt current evaluation strategies to capture data on the various and unique ways in which practitioners are delivering services to children and families

Whole Child Approach

- Assess students' long-term academic, social, and emotional needs as they are living with the COVID-19 pandemic
 - Provide ongoing virtual access to mental health supports to students and families throughout the summer and fall of 2020.
- Consider the use of an anonymous hotline
- Coordinate and address students' growing academic, economic, social, and emotional needs by expanding screening, mapping the availability of local services, and integrating student supports.

Continue Supporting Staff Development in High Quality Family Engagement

- Promote and support culturally competent personnel who understand, value, and integrate family beliefs and culture into distance service delivery that fits into the daily routines and activities of families
- Encourage and support flexible, responsive practices and service delivery to meet the evolving needs of families and children during different stages of the pandemic
- Partner with parent information and training centers and other parent support organizations

Continue Supporting Staff Development in High Quality Family Engagement (cont.)

- Encourage and facilitate use of telephone calls, text messaging, and other methods to coach the family around supporting their child's development
- Encourage and facilitate the dissemination of written materials (through email and postal service mailing) to support developmental and learning activities and potential adaptations
- Offer professional development opportunities to build personnel capacity related to coaching families around social emotional learning and development

Consider the Equity of Fiscal Policies

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