

Thanks so much for reaching out. I would be happy to share my thoughts regarding Special Education in Wayland.

I am a firm believer in equity and accessibility for all Wayland students. Our Special Education students are an extremely important part of our school district and I think it is important to create a positive environment that maximizes the potential of each of them. We need to think about how we can address the many unique learning styles we have.

We are extremely fortunate to have a dedicated and talented Special Education staff in Wayland. In my experience on the School Committee I have found that these professionals always think about what is best for our students and how we can achieve that. In 2015 the School Committee hired an outside consultant to review our Special Education programming to help us ensure that we were meeting the needs of our students, families and district in terms of educational effectiveness and cost efficiency. The review* made several suggestions that we have implemented including the addition of the position Assistant Director of Student Services.

The recent school closure and resulting remote learning has been hard on our Special Education students and staff. In person contact is extremely important for these students and very hard to replicate virtually. We don't know what our learning environment will look like in the fall, but we need to do our best to minimize remote learning for our Special Education students within the confines of health guidelines.

We know that we will need additional Special Education staff in the fall to address the many issues resulting from the pandemic. The budget is currently being reviewed so we can determine the best way to pay for the additional resources. We will very likely need to reallocate resources within the budget to meet our needs. We currently have two working groups, Operations and Teaching & Learning, that are actively planning for the fall. Special Education is an important part of this planning.

I hope this gives you a glimpse into my thoughts regarding Special Education in Wayland. I would be more than happy to speak to anyone with further questions, thoughts or concerns (jeanne_downs@wayland.k12.ma.us). Thank you!

*The report from the review can be found at:

https://www.wayland.k12.ma.us/UserFiles/Servers/Server_1036352/File/SchoolCommittee/Presentations%20&%20Reports/SPED_Program_Review_2015.pdf