

# **Alfred-Almond Central School District**

## **Special Education Department Report**

**A) Nature and Scope of Program** -This information refers to the 2022-23 school year.

The Alfred-Almond Central School District offers a comprehensive special education program for all district children with disabilities between the ages of 3 and 21. All children in need of special education are provided educational services. Present staffing includes nine (9) New York State certified special education teachers, five (6) full-time teacher aides, four (4) teacher assistants, a speech therapist, and a .8 school psychologist (This will remain .6 for the remainder of this school year).. CSE and CPSE responsibilities are the responsibility of the full-time CSE Chairperson.

The Inclusive Education program at Alfred-Almond is designed to keep all students with disabilities within the regular education classroom to the fullest extent possible. This is to provide all students the least restrictive environment. Services for these students are then provided within that classroom with the professional educators attempting to maximize the use of the regular education curriculum with the students with a disability. This model of instruction requires strong collaborative skills by the participants and a commitment to making the program work to the benefit of the students. Currently, with the existing staffing structure we are able to offer services for the unique needs of each individual child and differentiate instruction to meet IEP requirements.

The primary service for students within the inclusive education program is delivered in the direct consultant teacher model. This means, “Specially designed individualized or group instruction provided by a certified special education teacher to a student with a disability to aid such student to benefit from the student’s regular education classes.” {Part 200}

Due to the unique needs of two middle-school aged students, the district created its own self-contained classroom with an 8:1:1 model starting in the 2014-2015 school year. This involved shifting an existing special education teacher to this classroom and hiring an additional special education teacher at the elementary level. This allows the students to remain educated within their home district, while receiving the level of services necessary for their needs as per the IEPs. At this time, two (2) Alfred-Almond students receive their primary education in the 8:1:1 setting. A third student moved mid-school year. Currently, this class is located in the High School building.

Our inclusive education program also includes the services of our own locally employed full-time speech therapist and a GST BOCES hired .8 school psychologist. Psychological services for students with disabilities involve: 1) consultation with classroom and special education teachers on issues of management, learning styles and testing modifications; 2) observations and evaluations as mandated by law for identification of handicapping conditions and appropriate placements; 3) counseling as a related service for those students who need it and; 4) liaisons with BOCES and other outside agencies to facilitate student transfers and assure provision of needed services that are not available through the school.

The speech-language therapist works with 17 students in grades K-9 who have been classified by the CSE with speech and language impairment classification or another classification with related speech and language services as per their IEPs. Presently 51 (30-minute) sessions are provided per week. These are both individual, group, and classroom push-in sessions. Additionally, 30 students are being provided with speech improvement services (district level). Three of these students are currently recommended to be evaluated formally through the CSE referral process for possible classification. Services also include direct parent consultation as needed, with some regularly scheduled team meetings.

The major area of remediation is language and speech therapy (articulation). Each child is screened, evaluated, diagnosed, provided remediation, and re-evaluated. Early intervention is a key factor and good cooperation exists among administration, classroom teachers, consultant teachers and the speech therapist. Parents are strongly encouraged to be a part of the program. Articulation therapy is traditional, i.e. discrimination, words, sentences and conversation. Language therapy is a psycho-linguistic approach with emphasis on pragmatics. Auditory skills are stressed (listening for a purpose, memory, etc.). Push-in services are provided wherever they are appropriate, with an emphasis on using the curriculum as a vehicle for the delivery of services. The use of augmentative communication systems within the classroom is an ongoing area of focus as well.

Additionally, we assign duties of special education counseling to both of our high school counselors. Services provided include:

- 1) Consultation with classroom and special education teachers on issues of management, learning styles, program scheduling, and testing modifications;
- 2) Counseling as a related service for those students who need it;
- 3) Liaisons with BOCES, ACCESS/VR, and other outside agencies to facilitate student transfers and assure provision of needed services that are not available through school;

4) Coordinating and administering college admission testing programs for students with disabilities.

The special education teachers work with the students and school counselors to complete the two transition components of each student's IEP. This involves meeting with the student and parents to develop plans consistent with regulations for this area. Transition services means "a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability, designed within an outcome-oriented process, that promotes movement from school to post secondary education, vocational training, integrated competitive employment, continuing and adult education, adult services independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities must be based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests." (Part 200) This also includes assessing the student's post-secondary goals and aligning the student's IEP goals and course plan to prepare them to meet these goals.

Another area of focus and work for the school counselors, Secondary Special Education teachers and principal/CSE Chairperson is the CDOS Credential for students with disabilities. As noted below, this is an area that will require additional training for teachers and counselors, preparation of students with career plans, meetings for the CSE Committee and documentation. During the 2020-21 school year, the district has worked to implement the e-portfolio system previously developed with GST BOCES for each student that will allow them to document and track their CDOS requirements, as well as develop other tools including resumes. This data tracking forum will allow students to share their resources with colleges and employers.

*Most students with disabilities will be able to graduate with the NYS CDOS Commencement Credential as a supplement to their regular diploma (Regents or local diploma). Students who are unable to earn a regular diploma because of their disability may graduate with the NYS CDOS Commencement Credential as the student's only exiting credential, provided they meet the requirements for award of the credential and have attended school for at least 12 years, excluding Kindergarten. If the NYS CDOS Commencement Credential is the student's only exiting credential and he/she is less than 21 years of age, the parent must be provided prior written notice indicating that the student continues to be eligible for a free appropriate public education until the end of the school year in which he/she turns age 21.*

*It is the responsibility of each school to ensure that the student has been provided with appropriate opportunities to earn a Regents or local high school diploma. Each school must provide the student with meaningful access to participate and progress in the general education curriculum to assist the student to meet the State's learning standards. Access to the curriculum not only means that students are taking the appropriate courses needed to earn a regular diploma, but also that they are being provided with appropriate specially- designed instruction, accommodations, supports and services to progress in the curriculum. In order for students to also develop the knowledge and skills necessary to earn the NYS CDOS Commencement Credential, students must also be provided instruction that supports the achievement of the CDOS learning standards, access to career and technical education (CTE) coursework and opportunities to engage in school supervised work-based learning experiences, either in school and/or in the community. Schools should review their curriculum and instructional practices to ensure that all students with disabilities will be provided these instructional opportunities.*

#### **NYS CDOS COMMENCEMENT CREDENTIAL: REQUIREMENTS**

*The NYS CDOS Commencement Credential is a credential recognized by the NYS Board of Regents as a certificate that the student has the knowledge and skills necessary for entry level employment. There are two options available for students to earn this credential.*

**OPTION 1:**

- *The student must have developed a Career Plan that includes documentation of the student's self-identified career interests; career-related strengths and needs; career goals; and career and technical coursework and work-based learning experiences that the student plans to engage in to achieve those goals; and*
- *The student must have demonstrated achievement of the commencement level CDOS learning standards in the areas of career exploration and development; integrated learning; and universal foundation skills; and*
- *The student must have successfully completed at least 216 hours of CTE coursework and/or work-based learning experiences (of which at least 54 hours must be in work-based learning experiences); and*
- *The student must have at least one completed employability profile that documents the student's employability skills and experiences; attainment of each of the commencement level CDOS learning standards; and, as appropriate, attainment of technical knowledge and work-related skills, work experiences, performance on industry-based assessments and other work-related and academic achievements.*

*Each of the above requirements is further explained below.*

**CAREER PLANS**

*To earn the NYS CDOS Commencement Credential through Option 1, a student with a disability must have completed a commencement level Career Plan that includes documentation of the following:*

- *the student's self-identified career interests;*
- *career-related strengths and needs;*
- *career goals; and*
- *CTE coursework and work-based learning experiences that the student plans to engage in to achieve those goals.*

*The activities that the student includes in his/her Career Plan are not limited to those career-related activities that will be provided by the school and may include other activities that the student involves him or herself in outside of school (e.g., volunteer work or summer employment).*

*School districts must provide students with the form to document the student's Career Plan. NYSED has developed a model form for this purpose. (See Attachment 2) A student may choose to develop his/her Career Plan online, beginning in middle school, using CareerZone, a career exploration and planning website for youth that is provided at no cost to users by the NYS Department of Labor at [www.careerzone.ny.gov](http://www.careerzone.ny.gov).*

*Schools must assist the student, as appropriate, to develop his/her Career Plan. A student's preferences and interests, as identified in the Career Plan, must be reviewed by the student at least once annually and must be considered by the committee of special education in the development of the student's IEP. A copy of the student's Career Plan that was in effect during the school year in which the student exits high school must be maintained in the student's permanent record.*

**CDOS LEARNING STANDARDS**

*To earn this credential, the school must have documentation that the student demonstrated achievement of commencement level knowledge and skills relating to the CDOS learning standards in the areas of:*

- 1. career development;*
- 2. integrated learning; and*
- 3a. universal foundation skills.*

*(Students may, but would not be required to, also achieve competencies in career majors.)*

*Instruction toward the commencement level learning standards should begin in elementary school and continue throughout the student's high school experience. The CDOS learning standards, which are provided at the Elementary, Intermediate and Commencement levels, include a progression of learning standards:*

- 1. Career Development: Students will be knowledgeable about the world of work, explore career options, and relate personal skills, aptitudes, and abilities to future career decisions. Learning standards in the area of career awareness and exploration may be evidenced by completing a career plan; applying decision-making skills in the selection of a career option; analyzing skills and abilities necessary for*

specific career options and participating in work experiences as described in Section II of the New York State Work-Based Learning Manual (<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/cte/wbl/home.html>).

2. *Integrated Learning:* Students will demonstrate how academic knowledge and skills are applied in the workplace and other settings. This may be evidenced by applying academic knowledge and skills across multiple settings and demonstrating the ability to research, interpret, analyze and evaluate information.

3a. *Universal Foundation Skills:* Students will demonstrate mastery of the foundation skills and competencies essential for success in the workplace. These skills and competencies include the following:

- *Basic Skills* (reading, writing, listening, speaking, arithmetical and mathematical functions);
- *Thinking Skills* (problem solving, experimenting, focused observation and applying knowledge to new and unfamiliar situations);
- *Personal Qualities* (self-management, planning, organizing and taking independent action);
- *Interpersonal Skills* (teamwork and cooperation in large and small groups in family, social and work situations)
- *Technology* (designing and creating things from available resources to satisfy personal and societal needs and wants);
- *Managing Information* (accessing and using information obtained from other people, community resources and computer networks);
- *Managing Resources* (applying financial and human factors, and the elements of time and materials to successfully carry out a planned activity); and
- *Systems* (understanding and working within natural and constructed systems).

3b. *Career Majors:* (Optional for this credential.) Students who choose a career major will acquire the career-specific technical knowledge/skills necessary to progress toward gainful employment, career advancement, and success in postsecondary programs. The learning standards for career majors may be evidenced by acquisition of specific knowledge and skills within a specific career major. The Career Majors include the following:

- *Business/Information Systems;*
- *Health Services;*
- *Engineering/Technologies;*
- *Human and Public Services;*
- *Natural and Agricultural Sciences; and*
- *Arts/Humanities.*

The CDOS learning standards can be found at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/cte/cdlearn/documents/cdoslea.pdf>. Guidance included on this website includes key ideas, performance indicators describing expectations for students and sample tasks suggesting evidence of progress toward the standards. The Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Resource Guide with Core Curriculum is a companion document to the CDOS learning standards that provides information on the core content for each learning standard and career major, including teacher-developed classroom activities that help students achieve the CDOS learning standards (see <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/cte/cdlearn/cdosresourceguide.html>).

### **CTE COURSEWORK AND WORK-BASED LEARNING**

To earn the NYS CDOS Commencement Credential, a student must have successfully completed not less than the equivalent of two units of study<sup>2</sup> (216 hours) in either CTE courses and/or work-based learning experiences.

- *CTE coursework.* For purposes of this credential, CTE coursework means grades 9-12 CTE courses, including specialized and integrated courses approved by either the local board of education or by NYSED. For information on CTE courses, see <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/cte/>.
- *Work-based learning experiences.* Every student earning this credential must have earned a minimum of 54 documented hours of work-based learning experiences, which count towards the 216 hour requirement. These experiences must be under the supervision of the school district.

Work-based learning experiences may be provided through student participation in:

- registered State-approved programs (i.e., Career Exploration Internship Program (CEIP); General Education Work Experience Program (GEWEP); Work Experience and Career Exploration Program (WECEP); and Career and Technical Education Cooperative Work Experience Program (CO-OP)); and/or through
- other work-based learning experiences that are district approved including, but not limited to:
  - job shadowing,
  - community service,
  - volunteering,
  - service learning,
  - senior projects(s), and/or
  - school-based enterprise(s).

School credit may be given for these experiences. For further information on work-based learning experiences, see [www.p12.nysed.gov/cte/wbl/docs/WBLmanualMarch2013.doc](http://www.p12.nysed.gov/cte/wbl/docs/WBLmanualMarch2013.doc).

The U.S. Departments of Labor and Education have jointly developed specific guidelines for school districts to use when providing community-based work programs for students with disabilities aged 14 or older (see <http://www.dol.gov/whd/FOH/ch64/64c08.htm>). All registered work-based learning programs must be under the supervision of a NYS certified work-based learning coordinator. It is highly recommended that all work-based learning activities that place students out into the business community, whether registered or not, be under the supervision of a NYS certified work-based learning coordinator for the safety and protection of the student and employer. For students with disabilities, the work-based learning coordinator should also collaborate with special education teachers to assure that the expectations of the worksite and the needs/goals of the students are considered.

Other non-registered work-based learning programs should include, but are not limited to, the following components:

1. a certified teacher or guidance counselor with the proper work-based learning career development extension overseeing the learning experience;
2. an appropriate work site placement;
3. supervised on-the-job training;
4. related in-school instruction;
5. coordination of in-school and work site components;
6. a training plan;
7. student evaluation;
8. a copy of student working papers for work site placement; and
9. a memorandum of agreement with the work site.

The special education staff, CTE teachers, family, student, and/or work-based learning coordinator should collaborate to create a coherent program that includes related in-school instruction and coordination of in school and work site components. The school district is responsible to ensure that the student receives special education supports and services to participate in the work-based learning experiences, consistent with the student's IEP.

Work-based learning experiences must be provided consistent with NYSED guidelines and documented in a student's transcript. Guidance on these and other work-based learning programs is provided in Attachment 3 and at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/cte/wbl/home.html>.

### **EMPLOYABILITY PROFILE**

The district must ensure that the student has at least one work skills employability profile completed within one year prior to a student's exit from high school that documents the student's:

- employability skills and experiences;
- attainment of each of the commencement level CDOS learning standards for standards 1, 2 and 3a; and
- as appropriate, attainment of technical knowledge and work-related skills, work experiences, performance on industry-based assessments and other work-related and academic achievements.

A copy of the student's employability profile(s) must be maintained in the student's permanent record. An employability profile will provide students with a better understanding of how others view their strengths and the skills they may need to continue to work on to realize their goals; summarizes their

*work-experiences, skills, abilities, knowledge and talents to assist in the development of a resume; and provides potential employers with evidence of work-skills attained.*

We presently contract with the Greater Southern Tier Board of Cooperative Educational Services for services in an 8:1:1 class for four students, and in a 12:1+(3:1) for one student. We cross-contract with Cattaraugus-Allegany Board of Cooperative Educational Services for services in a 6:1:1 classroom for one student.

Other GST BOCES programs our students have attended in the past include the ACCESS 12:1:1 Classroom and the Project SEARCH program at Ira Davenport Hospital in Bath, NY. While we do not have any students attending these programs currently, they are options we continue to consider for students needing to continue their school-based education.

ACCESS is a community-based academic, social, and vocational program designed for students aged 18-21 years old. With direct support from GST BOCES staff working collaboratively with personnel and various agencies, students enrolled in ACCESS will transition to adult opportunities within the surrounding community. ACCESS is a program we utilize for some of our students who do choose to continue their education with Alfred-Almond beyond age 18. This allows flexible and individualized programming for this age group as well as providing more opportunities for paid employment in the community.

The Project SEARCH High School Transition Program is a unique, business led, one year school-to-work program that takes place entirely at the workplace. Total workplace immersion facilitates a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration, and hands-on training through worksite rotations. This program is designed specifically for students in their last year of eligibility for special education services.

Please see attached charts for the number of students by type of disability and their placements.

In 2022-23, there are currently nine (9) students, ages 3-5, who receive services as determined by the Committee on Preschool Special Education. There are currently two (2) additional preschool students being evaluated to determine if they are eligible to receive services. Of these 9 students, 4 (four) are anticipated to be entering our school age program for the 2023-24 school year. It is predicted that all four (4) students will require classification and services entering Kindergarten, however that does not include information for the students currently being evaluated. At this time, zero (0) additional students are anticipated to transfer into CPSE from Early Intervention (EI) programming at the end of this school year. Presently, all 3-5 year old children requiring special education will follow the Committee on Preschool Education process. Students younger than this will be served through the Family Court – Early Intervention process.

The increase in students identified as preschoolers with a disability is an area that continues to significantly affect our primary classes. It is essential that we maintain appropriate services and monitor the needs of this group effectively.

The majority of these students currently receive related services either at home or in their daycare or preschool setting.

These students may receive their instruction through the GST BOCES preschool special education classroom in Hornell if a more restrictive setting is required. We currently have one (1) student in a special class setting through CA or GST BOCES with zero additional students on a waiting list. We anticipate zero (0) CPSE students in the 2023-24 school year may receive their instruction through one of these programs.

The CPSE Committee Chairperson works closely with both BOCES personnel and Allegany County and Steuben County personnel to coordinate the provision of services. Throughout the past few years, the school district CPSE has become more involved in the transition process for children from Early Intervention into the Preschool process. Recent recommendations from the Temporary Task force on Preschool Special Education focus the preschool decision-making and service delivery processes with school districts since they have the federal and state responsibilities for ensuring provision of special education services.

In the 2022-23 school year, we employ six (6) full-time teacher aides who work with the students with disabilities under the direction of the special education teachers and the regular education teachers. Of these, four are considered one on one aides who are assigned to work directly with one student for the entire school day, while two are classroom aides as required on the child's IEP. It is anticipated that five to seven (5-7) full-time aides will work directly with students with disabilities during the 2023-24 school year. This will be dependent on the IEPs and program recommendations made for our incoming Kindergarten students at their transition meetings.

Legislation affecting the educational requirements for paraprofessionals came about as a result of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. {Sec. 1119 Qualifications for Teachers and Paraprofessionals}. The district's phase-in plan to comply with the requirements for both highly qualified paraprofessionals and the new criteria for the type of work that may be assigned to paraprofessionals is now fully completed. This plan meets the criteria of this law and continues to meet the needs of the students within our unified education program and other existing programs for Special Education at Alfred-Almond. There are now four (4) full-time teaching assistants working within the Special Education program.



All Alfred-Almond Central School District Committee on Special Education and Committee on Preschool Special Education procedures and guidelines are in accordance with Part 100 and Part 200 of Commissioner's Regulations and local school board policy.

## **B) Evaluation**

Evaluation of the achievement of objectives at the local level is done by closely monitoring the teacher performance and the annual goals of each youngster as specified on their Individual Education Plan. For the special education classes at BOCES, we work closely with the special education personnel in assessing the programmatic needs of our students. Again, we closely monitor the annual goals of each student as specified on the Individual Education Plan. This monitoring is completed on at least an annual basis and sometimes more often.

Programmatic evaluation is carried on in an ongoing basis by the special education faculty, CSE Chairpersons/school principals. Data related to students' performance on the NYS assessments is utilized in this area. During the school year, special education faculty meetings are conducted on a regularly scheduled basis.

Feedback from teachers, administration and the committee on special education has been used to direct various activities during the school year. Activities are geared toward helping all teachers to employ better methodologies to improve their instruction and thus improve the academic results for all students.

Recent in-services have included the topics of transition requirements including those needed to meet State Performance Plan Indicator 13, e-portfolio development and training to prepare for more students receiving their CDOS credential, changes in assessments including the iReady diagnostic assessment, curriculum and graduation requirements, and goal writing and IEP development for newer teachers. Additionally, in-services have been held that have provided training related to specific types of disabilities, methods and materials for differentiated learning, behavioral strategies, disability awareness, and the use of technology in meeting the needs of all learners. Specifically, the use of the Google platform and Google Chromebooks to meet these needs has been a targeted area of professional development for the 2021-2022 school year.

In-services throughout the 2022-2023 school year have been designed to allow the special education teachers to learn how to utilize our current diagnostic platforms, and build social emotional learning experiences into the classroom.

The Reauthorization of IDEA 2004 has replaced the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) requirements with State requirements to develop and maintain provider qualifications. The State Performance Plan is designed to evaluate the State's efforts to implement the requirements and purposes of IDEA. USDE has established three monitoring priorities that must be addressed in the State's Performance Plan:

1. Free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment
2. Disproportionality
3. Effective general supervision

There are 20 indicators relating to these priority areas. The new requirements in IDEA relating to State Performance Plans and Annual Performance Reports have significant implications to the State and to the Local Educational Agencies for data collection, analysis and reporting, establishing measurable and rigorous targets and implementing both improvement strategies and possible sanctions.

*IDEA* is now aligned with the important principles of *RTTT* in promoting accountability for results, enhancing the role of parents and improving student achievement through instructional approaches that are based on scientific research. While *IDEA* focuses on the needs of individual students and *RTTT* focuses on school accountability, both laws share the goal of improving academic achievement through high expectations and high-quality education programs.

Through these efforts we are reaching beyond physical access to the education system toward achieving full access to high-quality curricula and instruction to improve education outcomes for children and youths with disabilities.

### **C) Facilities, Equipment, and Materials**

The renovation project in 1990-91 and the capital project in 1996-97 have addressed the needs for classrooms in our special education program. We have eight full sized special education classrooms as well as a CSE conference room. The upgrade in our facilities for physical education during the last building project addressed the needs of our adaptive physical education program. The Phase III Renovation Project has further addressed needs for the adaptive physical education needs in an inclusive setting with the use of the fitness center equipment. In 2016, the 8:1:1 classroom was updated with an ADA compliant bathroom.

Implementation of the current Technology Plan to provide 1:1 Chromebook use for students in each classroom enhances the accessibility to the curriculum for students with special needs.

We currently make use of the funds from the Federal 611 grant for salaries of both Special Education Teachers as well as Teaching Assistants. These monies continue to be utilized for the sub-allocation costs related to Preschool students with disabilities. We plan to apply for these 611 funds again in the upcoming year to supplement our local funding, as required by law.

Another funding source we use to supplement our local funding are the 619 funds, which are used for salaries as well. These funds are used in conjunction with 611 funds for the sub-allocation costs related to the education of Preschool students with disabilities.

#### **D) History**

We have successfully continued organizing and systematizing our procedures, forms, documentation, and other assorted information. By February 1993, we had completely computerized our CSE functions with the Part 200 Management System. In order to continue to provide the teachers and staff with more access and greater efficiency with the computerized system of generating IEPs, the district has purchased web-based software, Cleartrack. This was added during the 2003-2004 school year and staff is now fully trained in using this software. The CSE Chairpersons and secretaries also utilize this program in generating reports, data tracking and other record management areas. In 2012 the SMS Integration Service was added to our software package allowing the E-school data to populate Cleartrack and RTI Edge. The establishment of effective procedures and systems is an ongoing area of emphasis.

We have also continued our efforts to increase the awareness of our faculty in dealing with students with disabilities. We have developed a special section as part of the Teachers' Handbook as a reference for the faculty.

The Unified program, which we started in 1994-95 at the kindergarten level, extends through the (12<sup>th</sup>) twelfth grade. It currently serves approximately 89% of our special education population. This program meets both state and federal requirements, which mandate that students be educated to the greatest extent possible with their non-disabled peers, in what is termed an LRE or Least Restrictive Environment. It is our belief that this collaboration between general education and special education will result in greater progress for all children. By following this model, we are able to better serve the needs of our special education students, in a regular education classroom, with their age appropriate peers.

Working together as a unified team of educators has provided the following outcomes:

- \*more exposure to the regular curriculum and greater expectations and opportunities for students to meet the standards for students with disabilities

- \*more intensive instruction in the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities

- \*a higher level of learning in the social and behavioral skills needed in society due to the expectation and peer modeling of such skills in the regular classroom

- \*a decrease in the number of students referred to special education. General education/special education collaboration often results in students receiving help or strategies they need to solve problems before they are serious enough to warrant special education evaluation and placement

- \*an increase in the time available for special education teachers to support general education teachers and work with at risk students

- \*immediate help, in the form of intervention assistance, for students who may not otherwise be eligible for special education services

- \*collaborative teaching allows the student-teacher ratio to be more conducive to true learning

- \*collaborative teaching allows teachers to teach in a more diversified manner that will meet the needs of all students

- \*students will be prepared better for living in a world of diversity and possessing the strategies to be more understanding, accepting and successful adults

An ongoing need for the district has always been the issue of a special education summer program. Specifically, it has been a need for the students to have a summer program that provided a program more consistent with our unified approach of education. A summer program was initiated in the summer of 2002. The program designed was a half-day program, five days a week, for six weeks. This was made available with both Title I and Special Education (611) grant monies. The program is now sustained through use of local funds. The program has been expanded to those students entering grades one (1) through six (6).

The program was designed to provide additional instruction in Reading/English Language Arts and Mathematics to students who qualify for Title I services, as determined by summative and formative assessments, NYS ELA 3-6, and/or NYS Math 3-6 exams. Additionally the program was designed to include the services of a special education teacher in order to meet the needs of students with disabilities. The special education teacher and one (1) teacher assistant were utilized to support the instruction delivered by two teachers. In the summer of 2016 this changed to three full teachers, including a special education teacher, who worked collaboratively to address student's needs. A speech therapist has been hired to provide the related services required as per students' IEPs. The district contracts with Greater Southern Tier BOCES for the services of Occupational Therapy, Orientation & Mobility, and Visual Therapy services in order to meet these needs. Physical Therapy services will be contracted through Maple City PT.

This program was amended for the summer of 2012 due to budget constraints. The program now provides related services for the students requiring services as per their IEPs for students through grade 6. Students requiring extended school year for grades 7<sup>th</sup> and above are served through our GST BOCES program.

New York State continues a Medicaid reimbursement program, which provides the district with financial support for the costs of speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy services, and specialized transportation. The recordkeeping for this program has continued to grow each year so that it is now assuming a greater share of time and effort from the CSE/CPSE chairpersons and secretaries. An annual average of \$30,000 in revenue is generated when the proper personnel time can be devoted to this area.

Another program continued by the state is the mediation project, which provides an avenue to resolve conflicts with parents over special education issues without resorting to the expensive Impartial Hearing process.

### **E) Recommendations**

The need for the future is to continue and enhance the effective use of the special education faculty in working with the general education faculty and staff. This allows the integration of pupils with disabilities as much as possible. These efforts will be carried on with faculty meetings, various in-service conferences, and on an individual basis, teacher to teacher. The special education faculty must take the lead in establishing this close working relationship with other educators.

It is important that adequate funding continue to provide the necessary support to the faculty and staff for the various efforts that have started. This is a challenge, as we face the possible loss of funding for our grants.

The continued use of a physical education teacher who deals with the adaptive physical education needs of the students with disabilities has been very good. As we educate our students with a variety of special needs, the area of related services stands out for our attention. We are being faced with providing new and varied services to meet the needs of our students. This will represent a significant financial and time commitment on the part of the school district and school personnel. Currently two students receive Adaptive Physical Education as a service in their IEP.

The addition of teacher aides has been seen as a great benefit to all the teachers, both special education and regular education. In view of the changes that have been made related to the NCLB and State/Common Core requirements, the addition of teaching assistants has likewise brought added benefits to the teachers. This has, however, taken additional time and planning in order to define the roles of all personnel involved and provide the needed training related to these new positions. The positions of teaching assistants requires that the teaching assistants be evaluated related to their performance and requires ongoing monitoring of their qualifications in view of the criteria for this position. It should be noted that by law TA's cannot conduct independent primary instruction and must operate under the direction of their cooperating teacher.

As student's needs change, it is essential to continually evaluate staffing. While 8 out of the 9 current special education teachers act primarily in the consultant teacher model, this is adjusted on a yearly basis as the need for Resource Room and Special Class services arise in various grade levels.

The loss of a teacher aide and teaching assistant in 2012 has had an impact on this staffing. Likewise, the loss of a full-time CSE Chairperson has had a significant impact on the Unified Education program and available oversight and support of this program. The addition of a full-time CSE Chairperson beginning in the 2015-2016 school year has addressed this need. This process continues to require careful review by the principals working to determine the assignments of staff and the possible implications if further staffing is lost. All staff must be utilized to the fullest potential in order to meet the needs of the students in the general education classroom. Great emphasis at both the high school and elementary levels must be put on the model of team-teaching in the classroom. The resources of the special education teachers must be implemented through a more differentiated curriculum and more diversified instructional methodologies, and use of technology within the general education classrooms.

The district must continue to target the age group in the primary grades for preventive programs designed to meet the needs of students who are borderline academically successful or mildly disabled. These efforts should have the effect of reducing the need for more intensive and costly programs as these students get older and it should provide the chance for greater academic success for our students. The most important effort to concentrate on, for this age group, is in language (in all forms, i.e., verbal, written) development.

The key goals of the Special Education Department at Alfred-Almond continue to be:

To prepare all students with disabilities to meet the New York State standards. Particularly, there needs to be continuous improvement in this area for all students. Annual yearly progress must be made for the subgroup of students with disabilities.

To continue to strengthen the role of the Special Education teacher in the general education classroom and the role of the general educator with students with disabilities.

To maintain adequate staffing levels to meet student needs

Enhance methodologies for the implementation of IDEA at the K-12 grade levels

Continue to offer in-services and training for all educators to enhance their strategies for diversified needs

Continue to develop programs for in-district summer programs

Continue to strengthen the system of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) for the K through 12 curriculums

Continue to analyze data related to students with disabilities as well as their nondisabled peers. This information must be used to strengthen and differentiate the strategies and best practices that will address the areas of need

Develop and implement the district's Response to Intervention Model as a working model for identifying students with Learning Disabilities, and provide pre-referral strategies with non-disabled students.

Develop and implement Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) to address behavioral needs of both special education and non-disabled students.

Increase the number of students with disabilities enrolled in AP level classes and successfully entering 2 & 4-year colleges.

Increase the number of students with disabilities enrolling in 2-year and 4-year colleges after successful completion of high school.

Take an ongoing active role in the implementation of up-to date technology into the general education classes.