



Some districts have cut the link between spending and outcomes

DMC matched pair study

	Achievement (% of special education students proficient or above)			Spending (total special education costs per 1,000 students)		
	Higher achieving	Lower achieving	Comparison	Higher achieving	Lower achieving	Comparison
	23%	19%	-17%	\$1,966,813	\$2,309,843	17%
	59%	49%	-16%	\$1,047,794	\$1,308,291	25%
	74%	67%	-10%	\$3,757,111	\$4,171,056	11%
	20%	9%	-52%	\$1,920,746	\$2,305,451	20%
	28%	25%	-10%	\$838,091	\$1,017,067	21%
	28%	24%	-16%	\$1,486,815	\$1,452,765	-2%
	29%	21%	-27%	\$1,428,204	\$1,654,591	16%
	27%	18%	-32%	\$1,326,225	\$1,621,811	22%
	67%	53%	-22%	\$1,225,900	\$1,928,257	57%
	16%	13%	-18%	\$975,421	\$1,267,451	30%
<b>Average</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>-19%</b>	<b>\$1,597,312</b>	<b>\$1,903,658</b>	<b>19%</b>

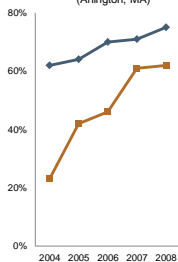
- Like communities
- 19% more spending
- 19% fewer students proficient or above

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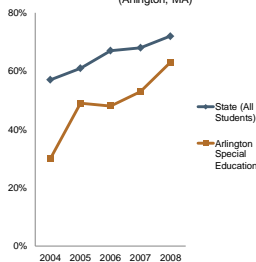
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Closing the special education achievement gap is possible

English MCAS - Grade 10  
Advanced + Proficient  
(Arlington, MA)



Math MCAS - Grade 10  
Advanced + Proficient  
(Arlington, MA)



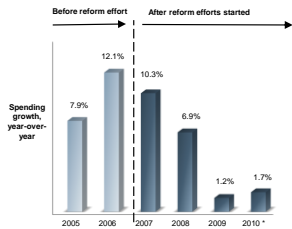
Source: Rennie Center, Seeking Effective Policies and Practices for Students with Special Needs, Spring 2009

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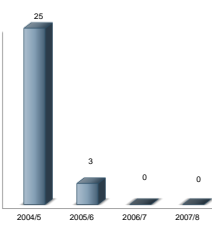
Real spending declined, while parent satisfaction increased

Growth in special education spending  
(Arlington, MA)



Special education costs increased by less than inflation.

Number of formal parent complaints  
(Arlington, MA)



Parent complaints to the Massachusetts DOE fell from 25 to zero.

\* Budgeted

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How is this possible?

Do you believe this is possible?

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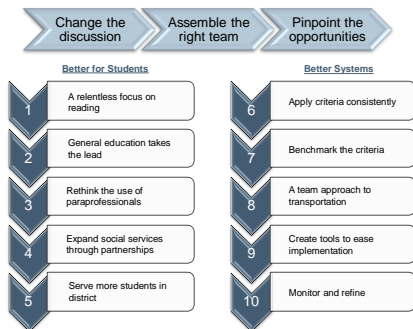
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A Win-Win Approach to Improving Student Achievement, While Reducing Special Education Costs



Children matter most

- Every idea must be child centered.
- It is not O.K. to balance the budget on the backs of our neediest students.
- It is O.K. to spend less if it does not harm children.



**Let's look at the possibilities from a student's perspective.**

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### Robert can't read well



- Struggles with sounding out words.
- Doesn't like to read.
- Reads slowly and doesn't catch the main points.

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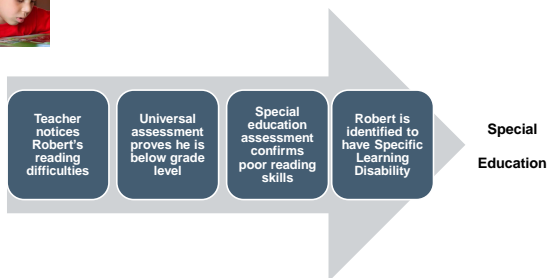
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### What happens? Test and refer



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### Robert gets help, but...



- He is pulled out during core reading.
- He is tutored by a paraprofessional.
- He is helped by a special education teacher who:
  - Is not a trained reading teacher
  - Lacks a connection to daily instruction
  - Does not provide extra time on task
  - Does not always set high expectations

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If Robert were my son, I would want:



National Reading Panel recommendations

- 1. Clear and rigorous grade-level expectations
- 2. Frequent measurement of student achievement and growth, influencing instruction and intervention
- 3. Early identification of struggling readers, starting in kindergarten
- 4. Balanced instruction in the five areas of reading as part of a 90-minute/day literacy block
- 5. Remediation and intervention, seamlessly connected to class instruction
- 6. Additional instruction, averaging 30 minutes a day and using more than one pedagogical strategy
- 7. Explicit instruction in phonics in the early grades and comprehension in the later grades
- 8. A skilled teacher trained in reading instruction

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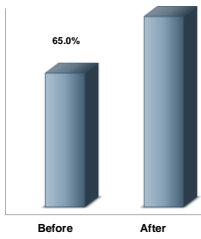
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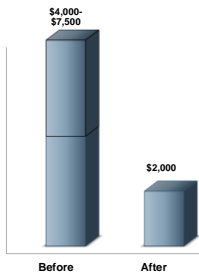
Good for Robert and the budget



K-5 students reading at grade level (Arlington, MA)



Cost per student (Arlington, MA)



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Paula gets help from a paraprofessional



- Has trouble focusing on her work.
- Acts out at times.
- Struggles academically.

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Everyone is happy, but for Paula...

**Teacher:** No more disruptions in class



But, Paula learns to act out when she wants a break

**Mom and Dad:** Extra help being provided

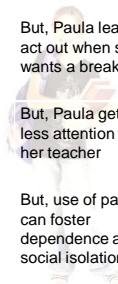


But, Paula gets less attention from her teacher

**Principal:** Helped a child in need



But, use of para can foster dependence and social isolation



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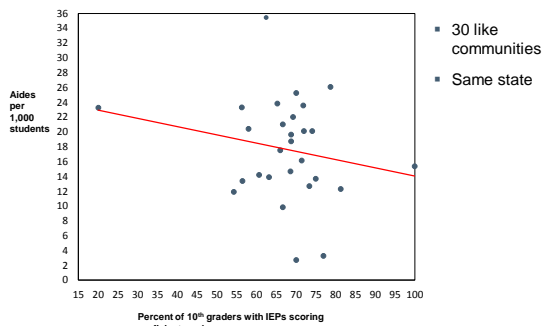
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Having more paraprofessionals doesn't raise achievement

Correlation between paraprofessionals and student outcomes



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Thoughtful, targeted support does help

- Reading teachers for reading problems
- Behaviorists for behavior challenges
- Math teachers for math issues

*"If all you have is a hammer, everything starts to look like a nail."*

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Paula will likely live to 80 or even 100



**Question:** Is our goal to help Paula get through:

- the day?
- till graduation?
- the 80 years post graduation?

**Intensive para support does help Paula get through the day, but can harm her chances for success after graduation.**

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Paula is helped best if provided...



- As much peer support as practical.
- Support only for tasks she can't do on her own.
- Support only for as long as needed.
- Support as a bridge to build skills, not a crutch.
- Academic support from teachers.

**Life long independence should be a primary goal.**

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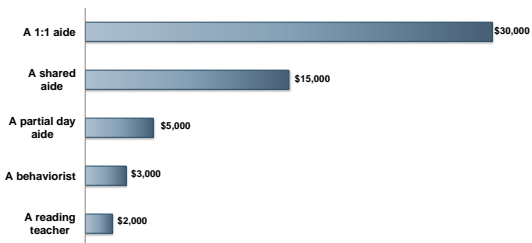
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Independence and achievement cost less than dependence

Typical annual costs per student



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Matt struggles in math



- Struggled with geometry.
- Might fail Algebra I.
- Has some gaps in his number sense and math facts.
- Doesn't like going to class.
- Is classified as learning disabled (SLD).

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Matt gets "special" math, but...



Depending on the district...

- **Replacement math** (a math class taught by a special education teacher).
- **Regular math plus extra help** in the resource room.
- **Co-taught (push in) math** (a general education teacher and a special education teacher at the same time).



**These strategies have not closed the achievement gap.**

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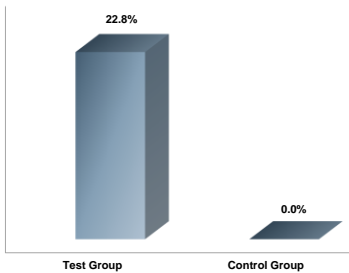
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If Matt went to Arlington High School, he would do almost as well as his general ed peers in the district



Change in percent of students with special needs scoring proficient or above on Math MCAS 2006-2008 (Arlington, MA)



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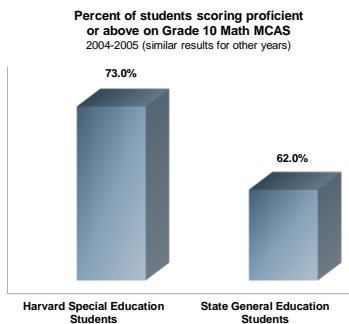
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If Matt attended the Bromfield School in Harvard, MA, he would do better than most general ed peers in the state



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If Matt were my son, I would want:



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Inclusion as the preferred setting.  | 5. Extra time on task, a lot of extra time.  |
| 2. Standards-based education.   | 6. A belief system embracing students with special needs can achieve at high levels. |
| 3. Extensive use of student achievement data.   | 7. Collaboration between special education and general education.                    |
| 4. Slightly reduced curriculum while maintaining general education standards (power standards). | 8. Study skills embedded into core content classes.                                  |

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What's different for Matt?

- |                       |   |   |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| Replacement math      | ➡ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower expectations</li> <li>• Below grade level content</li> <li>• Not taught by a math teacher</li> </ul>   |
| Resource room         | ➡ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home work help, not reteaching</li> <li>• Teacher's time split among multiple subjects and grades</li> <li>• Not taught by a math teacher</li> </ul> |
| Co-teaching (push in) | ➡ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No extra time on task</li> <li>• Non math teacher for half the instruction</li> </ul>  |

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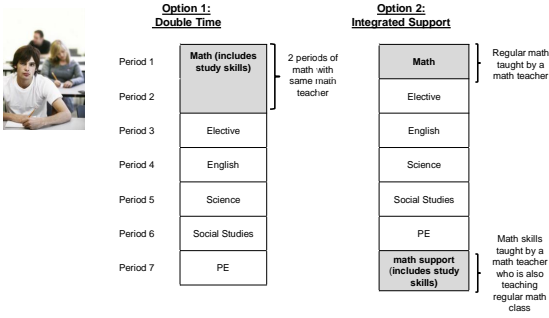
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What does Matt's day look like?



Special education teachers support and coach the math teachers.

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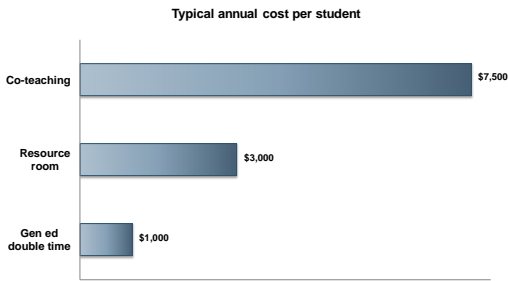
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General education double time is much less expensive




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Common sense, but not common

- ✓ Great for kids
  - ✓ Proven results
  - ✓ Much less costly
  - ✗ Not very common
- Requires close cooperation between general education and special education
  - Requires cross departmental budgeting
  - Requires coordination between principals and special education

Systems thinking

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For more information, please visit:

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## Q & A

(please don't be bashful)

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The District Management Council



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