

Lexington SEPAC/SEPTA November 2012 Parent Survey Comments

April 2013

Lexington SEPAC Parent Survey Comments--November 2012

The following comments were submitted by parents for survey questions where a comment option was offered. Please note that questions 1-5 were demographic questions and did not give respondents the option of providing a comment. Questions 18 and 19 were purely open comment questions. The Lexington SEPAC/SEPTA makes no representations about the veracity of the statements made in these comments.

We highly value the confidentiality of all parents, students, and staff. The SEPAC has reviewed the comments and made best efforts to remove any information that might identify parents, students, or staff. We have attempted to remove all student, parent, staff and school names and pronouns that would identify someone's gender.

In an effort to maintain confidentiality for parents and staff members, we also removed references to job titles that could identify a specific staff member. In many of these cases, we changed the terminology to refer to "teacher" (in the case of specific teachers) or administrator (in the case of specific administrative staff members).

Any comment which included content that we felt could possibly identify a parent, child or staff member, even after removing names and pronouns, was removed from the list of parent comments. The issues represented by comments that were removed are listed in the "Comments Removed to Ensure Confidentiality" section at the end of this document.

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Q6. Placement/Services Delivery for Children with an IEP

1. The only reason my child receives the "services" they need is because my child goes to a private school that Lexington reluctantly contributes a VERY SMALL portion to after years' worth of legal fees.
2. I never felt that my child should have been taken off the IEP and at the second assessment; the school system determined that my child was not qualified. We had my child tested privately and the psychiatrist believed that my child should qualify for services, but commented that it was unlikely that it would be provided in Lexington, based on the track record with the administration. We opted to provide private tutoring because our experience with the administration did not give us the comfort level that our needs would be addressed without hiring an advocate and attorney for our child.
3. The program seems to be much better now than in past years. My child had a huge improvement in the emotional area that enables him/her to have better participation in the program, but before that I could tell that the program was not tailored to meet the needs and the information about the disability was not passed along to the people who directly interact with my child. That situation created a lot of frustration for the teachers, us as parents and the worst part was always for my child, who ended up with depression and anxiety.
4. I question whether the teachers have sufficient time to effectively provide services. I think there are many distractions. It is clear that progress is not measured effectively when the 3 year evaluation results show NO progress. Some services are appropriate, and some are not and should be more intense.
5. Our student is having trouble accessing the curriculum because of a combination of emotional and learning issues. As of right now neither parent nor any LPS staff or faculty have been able to figure out the best way to help, although we have all been trying.
6. My child was misdiagnosed and mistreated terribly and suffers terrible psychological after effects as a result.
7. I believe my child is safe but does not seem to receive appropriate academic support.
8. The High School program is an excellent program for my child.
9. Lexington public schools cater to the bottom of the intellectual spectrum in elementary school. Our child was ignored by one teacher and another sent us through the IEP process only to be told that all of Lexington is above average. Both of our children are now happily in private schools. The public schools help children in the bottom 10% of IQ, but children with special needs on the other end of the IQ spectrum are absolutely ignored.
10. In my child's case, it is clear that the staff works very hard and cares for my child. However, they are terrible about measuring progress, rate of progress and embracing technology to help. The teachers and service providers seem to be trying but we suspect that administration holds them back.
11. The administrator changes our parent input statements unilaterally. They have changed placement unilaterally, and then falsely stated that it was a "Team" decision in the N1 Statement. They often send letters with untrue information about what we said or did. We have been buried in paperwork trying to respond to them all.

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12. We constantly feel bullied and threatened by administration and have great anxiety over what they may do behind the scenes that will affect our children and our family. It is very stressful to work with the special education department.
13. Our child goes to support room 3x a week and seems to be basically in a study hall with adult available for questions. My child is not getting direction or help with study skills.
14. Unless my memory-impaired, disorganized, and language-based learning disabled child can complete and hand in homework and projects more reliably, the regular education teachers have a hard time getting a handle on the academic skills and course-content learning. Yes, my child should learn to track work better, and to ask for help better. But given how emotionally exhausted the student is by time they get home from school, unless someone else is tracking homework assignments and work completion DAILY and IN DETAIL, and coaching on this daily, my child just doesn't complete enough homework for teachers to consider my child on track. I understand Academic Support is for learning strategies. But unless someone at school can track and prompt on work completion more thoroughly than at present, general ed teachers consider the student not up to par. I want to get past the assignment-and-completion tracking to work on the language-based skill development. But over several years, it feels as if we're not making it past the procedural obstacle of keeping up. If homework could be monitored *and completed* under supervision at school, I believe my child would have a different experience of school relative to peers, and relative to general ed teachers. I believe everyone means well. But this seemingly ordinary issue of completing sufficient work is, teachers' comments say, a barrier to overall educational progress. Also I think my child needs more nutrition during the school day. For example, the lunch period is too short to eat fruit (takes too long to peel an orange!).
15. The IEP process is flawed. At the IEP meeting the school already has a written IEP that they just want to read. No input from parents, no input from outside specialist. There should be at least two meetings; the first to discuss input from ALL sources, the second to draft an IEP (not present it).
16. Some staff have stated to parents in confidentiality they were forced by LPS to remove child's academic needs from evaluations, and LPS knew what services child needed, but refused to provide them.
17. Lexington needs to start providing a post-secondary program for students who have finished their education but still need services (until age 22).
18. We left the middle school because my child's academic needs were not being met.
19. I feel that my child should have more services and that Teacher X wants to give those additional services but is constrained by budgetary resources. Teacher X therefore gives as much as he/she can but it is not sufficient for my child's needs, so we need to supplement with private therapy.
20. The services my child receives and the quality and the quality and consistency received is much improved since being out-of-district. In-district, in middle school, it was inconsistent, poorly measured, inaccurately measured at times, or not measured at all. My child's articulate concerns were dismissed until finally my child fell apart and required wrap around services only available out-of-district. This SPED administration failed my child quite deliberately and the cost to my child, our family, and our town as a result are quite high and were quite avoidable.
21. The IEP as written sounds good, but my child does not actually receive most of the services. The support class is more of a small study hall and not at all what my child needs. Repeated calls and emails to the support team continue to go ignored/unanswered.
22. My child is bullied/teased on a regular basis and does not feel safe at school.
23. My child has had an IEP since kindergarten, and the IEP team always worked with me to make sure the educational needs were well managed. Now that my child has hit high school I have to email teachers weekly, basically begging for information. I have emailed the guidance counselor with an introduction of myself and

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my child explaining what the needs were- they never responded! I have had to contact the Dean to discuss concerns I had about the lack of support I felt like I was getting in communicating about my child-- I was referred to the guidance counselor (the one who doesn't reply to my emails) or I was told to speak with the resource room teacher. I know this survey is supposed to be "anonymous" however, I am very disappointed in the lack of support and guidance we have had since the beginning of school and I have no issue explaining who I am if need be...

24. It took 6 months from the time I presented the neuropsychological evaluation I paid for to the school, to have the first meeting. It was on the last day of school. I was so disgusted, I pulled my child out of LPS.
25. I feel my child is cared for and supported by the classroom teacher, but recent comments by the resource teacher to my child has me concerned about the services being provided by the resource individual.
26. The services provided by my child's resource teacher are exceptional! X is proactive and follows through with me frequently with updates.
27. New to Lexington school. IEP was just reviewed and adjusted.
28. The services provided were better last year.
29. I find I have to spend a lot of time monitoring and managing the school to make sure modifications and accommodations are made IN ADVANCE of my child doing poorly on a test. I find the implementation tends to come after a kid looks like they are struggling, rather than proactively.
30. I think my child's impairment is not adequately addressed as it comes up not in organized speech (such as a Q&A) but during spontaneous situations.
31. Carryover from what is being done in SPED to the mainstream teacher could be better. There are small things the general teacher could do that would be helpful to my child and wouldn't be disruptive to the rest of the class.
32. I feel that (when we were in the LPS) my child was put in a placement just for the convenience of the district, with a group that did not have my child's particular profile. The result was very emotionally difficult for my child. There was only one year out of 7+ that I feel it worked well. No attempt was made to measure progress, rather reports were based on undocumented (80% of time...60% of time) etc. which I did not understand.
33. There was a disconnect this year it appears to me. Worse report card and it was not flagged during progress report that my child was at C level.
34. My only objection is how long it took for my child to be tested and end up with the IEP. We had requested testing at the beginning of the year, and it took almost the entire school year before my child got it. My child has started this year with the IEP and it's great. I said neutral on the rate of progress question because we haven't been on it long enough to know.
35. All parties involved in my child's education have been generous, patient, and committed to my child's development.
36. Regarding the team's resource question above, I really don't have any idea. This was much easier to judge at elementary school than at middle school for reasons that have to do with the structure of the school day and the much larger number of teachers involved in his education. Future surveys should have a "don't know" answer category.
37. My child did not qualify for SPED, and as soon as I agreed that my child not be serviced under SPED despite findings indicating my child would benefit from some intervention (I incorrectly thought the team would make recommendations to help) the team disbanded and left the meeting as if the building was on fire.

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38. Services have changed considerably since last year. Previously, there had been more accommodation to individual needs and 'thinking outside the box' in terms of what made sense for our child. Also, attention had been more one-on-one throughout the day with mostly the same person - this allowed instructors to really get to know our child and our child's needs. We think some of the 'old way' of doing things should be preserved.
39. Did not qualify, and still does not speak in school.
40. I have an advocate and lawyer due to Lexington's poor handling of my child. For 2 years my child was in regular education, pulled out for services when my child needed smaller class size. It was a pure battle. I work in a school system and was shocked at the information I was being told or not told until this year when, after 2 years my child was moved to the X program. I first heard of it last June. I can believe Lexington failed the Special ED audit!!!!!!
41. Just get started with IEP last month.
42. Because of the above, my child is now achieving at much higher levels academically, socially, and emotionally.
43. I'm very happy with my child's teachers and in-class support. I don't think that my child's OT is working on sensory or gross motor delay - it seems to me they are working only on fine motor. I have not had time to pursue this, but plan to.
44. We should have more feedback from teachers.
45. My child had a 504 or IEP in place in a previous school system for five years. When we moved here, I provided the school with all the school records including the 504/IEP information and the updated doctor diagnosis. I was told that I would be sent documentation for the 504 but my child has received nothing despite two additional email reminders. So I do not know what is being done, what the process is or where my documentation is.
46. I am only checking of strongly agree and agree due to the teacher this year. The teacher last year did NOT follow my child's IEP and my child did NOT receive the services and/or accommodations that my child was supposed to. It was not until I filed a complaint with the DOE did my child receive what was granted in the IEP.
47. My child has had a 504 in place in his previous schools for the last five years. When we moved here in August, I provided the school records on my child's condition as well as the updated diagnosis of X condition to the school. I contacted the guidance counselor who I was told was the focal point for such communications at the high school and they promised to forward to me the standard documentation for the Lexington School system. After two follow-up emails, I still have not received it.
48. My child had a 504 in a previous school and has been diagnosed with X. I have forwarded all this information to the school but was told by the counselor that nothing needed to be done in the current school beyond informing the teachers of the diagnosis and that no formal 504 was needed so any further interaction on this subject was unnecessary on my part unless there was a problem. I do not know what the teachers have individually implemented or what should be taking place as far as formal procedures.
49. I do not feel like part of the team process, my input is disregarded and I feel constantly pressured to accept things that are not appropriate.
50. Even though my child deemed eligible by the 504 laws (ADA including the amended law which the public school had no idea about an amendment by congress) my child was found not to be eligible for a 504. The Federation of Children agreed with me as well as Children Hospital and the Civil Rights office in Boston. Lexington district found it acceptable not to find my child eligible for a 504 or for direct services. My child

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has an ICAP which I had to write because the guidance department has no training or understanding of appropriate accommodations for someone with a medical diagnosis that interferes with learning or how to determine appropriate accommodations for X. Chose not to appeal for personal and financial reasons.

51. My child was traumatized at school. My child was misdiagnosed as having an emotional disorder, when my child was really showing frustration because the instruction was not meeting the needs. The therapist concurred. It was horrible. None of my feedback was incorporated, and every communication I had with the program, staff and principal was dismissed.
52. My child was taken off support and I feel my child has fallen through the cracks at LHS. My child is extremely hard-working, but the current GPA does not accurately reflect my child's abilities. Only a few teachers at the HS have cared enough to make contact.
53. The general Ed teachers have not been well informed about the accommodations of the IEP. Never have all accommodations been implemented by all teachers. Those that have been implemented have been inconsistent.
54. Resources are pulled at certain times to do school wide assessments or MCAS test administration...there have been times my child does not get services for the amount of time specified in the IEP (not observed as a problem this year, yet).
55. The quality of the teachers and the support for the program is key. We've been blessed with great teachers and a well supported program grounded in the latest research. I have concerns that the quality is maintained in middle school and high school. I've heard that it is not.
56. Has only been on IEP for one week.
57. It is my opinion that with the number of children with special needs in each class, and the amount of material that needs to be covered daily, there is no way that the teachers could possibly provide most (if any) of the services set forth in one's IEP or 504 plan.
58. We really appreciate the extra attention the teachers, aides and specialist gave our child and it's definitely helped make my child successful in the classroom.
59. My child is on an IEP for communication impairment when my child has a specific learning disability, language processing, but they will not provide services for that.
60. While my child seems to be doing quite well, I'm not sure how my child's progress is measured effectively, especially given that formal reports will now be only 2x yearly, rather than 3x as in the past.
61. Classroom aides have zero to very minimal experiences to handle the child as well as they come and go so fast and district has hardly formed any rule or regulation to prepare them and keep them in the district.
62. Resource staff cannot effectively handle math and science issues. Needs and test results vary dramatically every three years, depending on who is administering and interpreting test results. Large gap between in-school and private assessments.
63. Lexington Public Schools have been great for my child and me.
64. Communication is a HUGE issue. My child is from a family of divorce. Teachers gossip way too much and don't communicate well with the parent they do not like.
65. There is a real lack of follow through since the teachers are over-taxed.
66. It is not really tailored to the student's particular needs.

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67. My child has made amazing progress since starting preschool.
68. My child's program is going through a transition with new staff and direction. I don't have enough information yet to confidently answer these questions.
69. I find the IEP form to be so confusing to read and understand. It repeats the same thing again and again and it is so hard to follow. I wish you would reconsider that document and make something a lot easier to read and understand what services your child is getting.
70. It would be helpful if some of the classes, such as drama, were used as an opportunity for more work on social pragmatics.
71. We have been incredibly pleased with both the response of the team and the progress of our child throughout the years our child has had an IEP.
72. I asked my child if they say the people they are supposed to see that day and my child says No. I also know that my child did not receive the speech services they should have received during the summer. The therapist seemed to just decide not to do it and I decided to let it go because we were almost done there anyway.
73. I'm very impressed with the level of care and attention given to my child on the quite extensive IEP. My child is slowly but steadily learning and achieving goals! All of the teachers and therapists have done a great job!
74. Now that my child is in a private special ed school, my child is receiving the support my child needs to develop the skills my child lacks. However, in the public school up until this point that was not the case not because they were not trying but it was virtually impossible to give the support in the public school environment.
75. There is little communication from the middle school regarding my child. It is hard to gauge what is working and isn't. Our contact for our child doesn't have a phone so we can't leave messages or easily communicate with contact. I felt the elementary schools were much better at "caring" for my child. Now I feel shut out and almost unwelcome at the middle school and not a partner in my child's care.
76. We are only here two months, so it's hard to say whether the placement is effective. It's not the placement I wanted for my child, but I am comfortable with the approach being taken by the district to enact LRE and start with a gen ed classroom (though I highly doubt my child will end the year in one).
77. My child and I have not received the protections of the IDEA. The district did not comply with the procedural safeguards, nor the substantive requirements required. The IEP presented to us was unilaterally created and ignored my child's needs. My rights under IDEA were universally ignored. I have been discriminated against and denied my rights under IDEA. My child has been denied his rights as well. We have both experienced the most egregious discrimination and retaliation. The district's retaliation included specious filing of a 51A with the DCF, which was determined to be baseless. The district refused to educate my 14-year-old child, sent my child home with no school work, no teacher, no tutor, and none of the IEP SPED services. The district refused to allow my child to remain in mainstream education, and attempted to send my child to a restrictive and inappropriate out-of-district placement his private service providers all believed was harmful and not needed. My child was never a behavior problem, and never had emotional or psychiatric problems that interfered with the school environment.

Q7. Placement/Services Delivery for Children with 504 plans

1. My child had an IEP from 3rd grade through 8th grade. In middle school my child transitioned to a 504 because of strong parent advocacy for 9th grade, then an ICAP when it was evident my child made significant progress in self advocacy. When I left the supportive environment of the IEP in 8th grade to a 504 maintained by guidance dept. staff no one talked anymore about the classroom experience, my child's learning, or future - the entire conversation switched to compliance with MCAS testing. I gave up on the 504 and contacted teachers directly where ever the learning disability affected the classroom.
2. This is our first year on a 504 plan, and it is making a huge difference in how our child is doing at school, and more importantly, how my child is viewing school.
3. At Middle school and LHS, my child is constantly denied the accommodations in place on my child's 504. Even when I contact the team teachers at the start of the school year to remind them to read the 504, most of them do not read it. I know this because when I meet with them and ask them what my child's disability is and what accommodations my child has, they usually can't answer me. I have been very close to reporting the teachers to the DOE, but haven't yet. I already have two meetings in the queue with LHS teachers who I informed about my child's 504 at the beginning of the year, who have denied my child's accommodations. The only way teachers will finally take this seriously is if someone gets reported, sued, and found to be in noncompliance with my child's rights under the 504 laws.
4. We have privately paid for outside neuropsychological assessment and OT assessments which show a number of areas not addressed in our child's 504 plan. We are in the process of meeting, again, with the team to see if any of my child's needs can be addressed within the school day.
5. It takes repeated requests to get responses and to meet about the 504 plan.
6. My child is still struggling with writing skills. I am surprised at how little progress has been made and wonder that in a school program like Lexington why hasn't my child made more progress?
7. The school has gone above and beyond to make sure that my child is well cared for and that all of the faculty know of my child's condition. My child is having a great year!
8. My child's school counselor has been invaluable in the helping us to make sure the 504 is implemented by the middle school teachers. In addition, my child has learned to self-advocate. Sometimes, we have to remind teachers of the 504 accommodations.
9. LHS is not easy to navigate for children with mobility issues in snowy or icy weather.
10. I feel that the Teams could be better informed about who has 504 plans and who does not.

Q8. How often do you interact with teachers and other Lexington Public School professionals regarding your child?

1. I have regular communication with my child's teacher and [the] coordinator has also not hesitated to contact and meet with me whenever necessary.
2. After my child FAILED completely in LPS and was placed in a private school it became a very adversarial relationship.
3. We are very happy with the curriculum provided at the elementary level. We have generally found the teachers and staff to be excellent. We are, however, dissatisfied specifically with the administration and staff of the special education department. We found the process to lack clear and appropriate communication channels. We also found the meetings to be poorly managed. Our child's IEP written test results had two typos with another child's name in the place of our child. Leading us to believe no effort was made to independently write up the case. It was unprofessional and appalling that information that is this sensitive to a parent would be given such a low level of investment by the administration. It was obvious that nobody reviewed the written documentation. When I brought it to the attention of staff members at the meeting, it was taken from my hand. I was told that I would receive a corrected version, which I did. When we asked questions about specific results in the testing, our questions were never clearly answered. We left the meeting feeling very uncertain about the qualifications of the providers and administrators in attendance. It was at this time that we pursued private services for our child.
4. I try to keep communication with the teachers every day.
5. Would like more reports on what working on so I can support better.
6. As needed, usually not often.
7. Daily communication log. In-person/calls every 6 weeks for the special education, quarterly (parent/teacher conference) for others. SPED teacher does not have the habit to respond to e-mails, communication difficult.
8. It varies. I usually interact with the staff about once a week
9. By email, frequency varies from daily to every week or two.
10. In my experience, parents are not really encouraged to be in touch about the 504 -- as my child grows older, my child is afraid that parent engagement makes it worse for my child because teachers do not want to make the accommodations. This makes me sad and frustrated. If the school would demonstrate that things are covered, I would feel great. But, this hasn't happened. Older children can accurately report on specific services & whether they are being provided or not. Why doesn't the school just do the right thing, especially since it was agreed upon and is in the plan?
11. We have monthly meetings and if I have any questions, I feel comfortable asking.
12. We are in touch with the class teacher on a more regular basis.
13. We are not allowed to talk to teachers or staff, and our monthly clinic meetings are not being provided. Staff are told not to tell us anything about what happens at school.

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14. Interacting very frequently currently because procedures are not being followed and placement meetings are being held without going through due process and without Team meetings.
15. We are out of district.
16. We set up a meeting w/ support teacher this past quarter. There was supposed to be weekly contact, but the teacher has been out of school and no one has told us what plan is or if the teacher will be back.
17. was not frequently enough.
18. I'm behind, I'm sorry to say, on contacting teachers and academic support
19. We are contacted when it is usually too late to correct the problem. For example, we are notified that my child has an incomplete in a subject. It would be most helpful if we heard from a teacher that my child was late on an assignment. Not very helpful to hear about a problem the day before grades need to be turned in.
20. We no longer need to because we have left the system.
21. When my child was on the 504 plan I had weekly contact with the teachers. The 504 plan was a lifesaver. All survey answers reflect that time.
22. Teachers and administration seem to actively discourage involvement. I try not to take too much of their time because of this. When I ask for work completed at school to be sent home occasionally, it is on that day, and not again until I ask again. I cannot even get my child's special ed. teacher to meet with me. He/she asks me to wait until an IEP review.
23. Or as needed.
24. Sometime more if necessary.
25. I only interact with LPS as necessary. I interact with the out-of-district teachers and admin regularly. They invite my input and give it respectful consideration. What a difference!
26. by email
27. We plan to meet a couple of times each quarter. So far we've had one team meeting, and we plan to meet with the entire team during conferences.
28. We are supposed to get weekly updates, but that hasn't happened since the second week of school. Repeated attempts to reach the support staff continue to be ignored/unanswered.
29. On an as needed basis. Resource teacher is very open to communication.
30. I spend about two hours a day on average doing some kind of advocacy, whether it is being in touch with special educators, regular educators, administrators, or other professionals involved in my child's life.
31. Was not frequently enough.
32. My child's teacher frequently provides updates as to my child's progress in his/her classroom.
33. I am in touch with the support team probably 2x a month to clarify something.
34. Sometimes more... the communication takes place whenever it is needed and/or whenever I happen to see them in the halls at school. Sometimes it's weekly, sometimes monthly.

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35. Unless I contact them.
36. It varies, I do know that I can reach out to the team and have them respond in a timely manner.
37. Homeroom teacher is EXCELLENT. We exchange emails frequently. I don't believe he/she can do any more than he/she currently is.
38. I wish I could have monthly reports.
39. I initiate the contact 80% of the team - very informal- just check in when I think there is something the staff should be aware of.
40. Sometimes I only touch base once a month but some months I may be touching base once a day for a week. It comes and goes as my child's disability often has a cyclical nature to how the child is responding to what is going on at school.
41. I feel that the communication has been difficult and for the most part the administrators and teachers have treated me with disrespect. E-mails have typically not been answered, and my attempts to reach out and get services met with stonewalling and delay.
42. I typically deal with the people my child works with on my child's IEP yearly- meeting and email whenever something arises.
43. I have given up.
44. Plus times, which have been infrequent, when something specific comes up.
45. We have generally been pleased with communication once we initiate it, with teachers.
46. When necessary
47. It varies, sometimes I hear daily, the communication book is not used daily. I'm frustrated!!!!
48. Very hard to get in touch with people for a phone conversation. Most don't answer the phone and take a while to return calls.
49. Our interactions are short and frequent and focused on improving learning for my child.
50. I have interacted less this year than last -my child was in a special class last year but is mainstreamed this year.
51. My child is now home schooled. When they were in school, communication was monthly or more often.
52. I email as needed.
53. My child just started K. We have talked to the teacher and in-class support twice (once formally). Don't know how this will go in the future.
54. I have no communications with my child's guidance counselor or teachers on my child's situation or progress with the 504. I assume they have been notified but I am not sure what is in place or what communications has been made. Responses from the counselor who I was told was the focal point has been sporadic and not followed through on the counselor's side.
55. Would like more feedback.

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56. Again only because this year's teacher is AMAZING. Last year was very hard.
57. I have had no direct interactions with my child's teachers except when I initiate contact. My child's science teacher did say that he/she was glad to know of my child's condition because it explained certain behaviors and stressed that my child needed organizational and focus assistance from me.
58. At this point I try to say little.
59. I make several attempts, but am pushed back.
60. As needed only on either part.
61. I used to communicate weekly. I took my child out of Lexington Public schools and am now paying for a private school out of pocket. My child is thriving now that we are out of district.
62. Through written communication, and as needed.
63. I have access to interact with them daily but, we really only now need to touch base with the staff about once a month. If there is an issue I call and if they have any questions they call. The lines of communications are open.
64. Every 2 weeks?
65. Really, it's as needed. Some weeks we don't communicate at all and other weeks it's every other day.
66. IEP started this month and not evaluated yet.
67. If we do not do so directly, the school counselor or Guided Study/Learning Center teachers do so for us.
68. There is not much contact.
69. I will contact as needed - they are very responsive.
70. The teachers are very responsive to my observations and concerns.
71. My child is at LHS. I have been in contact with several of my child's teachers about once or twice a month since the first progress report came out. In middle school I was in contact with teachers and guidance counselor on a sporadic basis, about once a month.
72. As required and depending on what is going on.
73. Daily
74. and as needed
75. We communicate with the nurse regularly.
76. As needed, but usually about once a month.
77. Been very challenging since my child started middle school.
78. My child has become so independent and such an effective self-advocate that I no longer need to be involved on a frequent basis.
79. I communicate daily with my child's teacher for a variety of issues both SPED and non-SPED related.

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80. The District severely limited my contact with school personnel and allowed contact, only with supervision, with each subject teacher approximately once every 16 weeks, and never with any SPED service provider.
81. I wish we got more updates about how the IEP is working or not working to make adjustments.
82. No regular schedule.
83. My child's teacher calls me every Friday to check in. The teacher always gives a very thoughtful report on the week. I'm both very grateful and impressed with the teacher's dedication to teaching and to my child.
84. Prior to my child's placement, I was interacting with teachers on a weekly and sometimes daily basis.
85. We have found it difficult to get in touch with teachers and SPED educators at the middle school level. The default seems to be email but not all teachers respond or provide a clear response. The phone situation at the middle school is ridiculous.
86. Different teachers welcome differing interactive frequencies and methods. Not all love sharing their email addresses.
87. More as needed.

Q9. Partnering with Parents/Outside Experts

1. Because LPS stands behind the policy that they can't "diagnose" a parent is forced to obtain outside testing (which costs a fortune) for an official learning disability diagnosis - LPS does not readily accept or incorporate all recommendations, and in fact, I had to request several times that my child's specific diagnoses be listed on the IEP.
2. The administrator always mentions that the "parents paid for that outside expert opinion" and implies that we influenced the content to the IEP Team. This is very unprofessional.
3. I have the feeling that there was a commitment to refute every single thing I requested in the past years to help my child academically until I just gave up because it was exhausting trying many different ways to get the messages across until I faced it that the last resource was a hearing until in one of those SEPAC meetings I found out that the district has the knowledge and experience to deal with people like us; it was going to be too expensive emotionally and economically so I decided to use all that effort to find ways to help my child and forget about trying to get the modifications in the program for my child to make "effective progress."
4. Our Neuropsych exam was deemed "unacceptable" and the team decided to do their own.
5. The school staff dismiss outright parental concerns and any advice or opinions from outside experts. They are too busy attacking the child and the parents to read and learn from outside experts.
6. School disregarded their own expert outside recommendations.
7. I haven't submitted any reports from outside doctors recently. When I did, they were carefully considered.
8. An outside report we paid for and submitted was rejected by High School SPED staff. Subsequent testing came to slightly different conclusions, though the IEP was not in question.
9. If I were doing this all over, I would hire an attorney. Taking the "nice parent" path has not served my child well. The administration refers to "those parents" and I never wanted to be anything but constructive. So, we took this path instead. I suspect my child would have been better served if I had hired an advocate. Ultimately, the child really deserves all adults to be aiming to actually follow the plan.
10. While the TEAM has a generally pleasant disposition, they are very defensive when it comes to outside experts and any questions or concerns raised by parents or doctors. No doubt this TEAM works hard for my child but their tunnel vision, group thinking, and need to cover themselves means that any honest meaningful discussion is tabled in favor of self-congratulations. Some of this is not even done on purpose. They work hard, they spend all day with my child and they feel that they know best. Thus while I don't question the general caliber of this TEAM, the lack of checks by their supervisors and administration, means that a child will languish unless the school is sued. God Forbid a parent complains and then starts the attempt to blame the parents rather than examining their own shortcomings.
11. The public elementary school dismissed all reports I brought in to advocate for my child. Most parents in our situation turn to tutors or private schools.
12. The administrator did not come to IEE meetings, then said he/she would not consider evaluations or allow IEP modification if we did not allow open access to private physicians. The administrator refuses to allow

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goals and benchmarks to be written at the meeting. The administrator says it is his/her job to "distill" the information and write the IEP after the meeting. When we ask for information about evaluations and evaluators being proposed, he/she says that it is their "right" to evaluate and they don't have to tell us that information.

13. Administration does not show up at IEE Review meetings and then refuses to allow the team to meet to amend the IEP based on the evaluations. Delays IEE review for approximately 6 months. Refuses to consider many independent evaluations altogether. Writes untrue information in N1Statements and letters.
14. The school thinks they know better than any experts.
15. LPS has not included parents' opinions or outside professionals' opinions & evaluations to work together as a team. The child's learning needs or disabilities continue not to be serviced or recognized by LPS.
16. The reports that I have had done from outside experts are looked at and considered at the IEP meeting but not always incorporated.
17. We left because the school system would not communicate with us.
18. The school does everything possible to discount, and dismiss the reports of outside experts with whom they disagree. They even bring their own contract experts to meetings who will use their credentials to discredit the reports of the parent's outside experts.
19. I have felt like an "after-thought" at IEP meetings. It is known that I need to approve the plan so the meeting is spent trying to convince me their pre-designed plan is right and less about listening to my unique view/understanding of my own child. I often have to remind them that my child is a whole child not only the piece they see in school.
20. My child's teachers seem to be aware of the documentation we provided to the school.
21. It is evident at IEP meetings that internal staff have conferred and have a plan. The meeting is then a forum to convince the parents and solidify the plan.
22. Our input, questions and concerns are repeatedly ignored.
23. I don't see this happening as well as it should.
24. It was too hard to communicate with teacher and team members. K and 1st grade teachers were resistant to reviewing IEP at beginning of school year. 1st grade teacher refused to take suggestion from OT to provide alternative seating for students (mine and others) with OT/motor challenges. We did not seek outside opinions during time my child was on an IEP.
25. Cannot comment - we are in the process right now of going back to the team and requesting services - many of which are suggested by our outside evaluators but were not suggested by school team. I have concerns that the findings were so different.
26. The school completely ignored the advice of our neuropsychologist. My spouse and I both felt that our concerns were treated with contempt.
27. We haven't had much interaction with the IEP team other than the parent/teacher conference.
28. The psych eval given to my child contained information that I felt was inappropriate to his/her learning situation. I had shared confidential info and it was written in the report. The psych tester wrote quotes that the guidance counselor made about my child that did not sound accurate to me. I questioned the guidance

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counselor who denied making those comments. The psychologist maintained the comments were made. The psychologist only removed certain statements he/she made under the direction of the SPED Director.

29. We have experienced both listening and condescension, and dismissal of the outside information.
30. I have had 2 private neuro Psych exams, which I paid for, and they had to do their own evaluation, not take my private evaluation as true? REALLY
31. To the first point, I wouldn't have it any other way. All stakeholders are highly engaged and informed.
32. I have submitted all documentation to the school but have had not had an adequate response or closure on this topic despite efforts on my side. This was taken very seriously in our previous school system and I cannot understand why this is not being worked on or seems to be of interest to anyone but me.
33. The school has been unresponsive to the information I have provided the system about my child and so I do not know how they view my child or how the information I have provided has been viewed.
34. The school basically ignored the Children's Hospital report and the findings of X disability from their own testing because they could get away with it, my child is making effective progress which should not deny a student from receiving a 504 plan. They chose to push ICAPS, which teachers ignore unless you are constantly in the teachers ear.
35. I do not feel like a partner, I feel like a bystander.
36. Last week my child had a Doctors appt to review neuropsych testing and the doctor was writing a letter to make recommendations for additional services after the testing indicated diagnosis X, so we will see how the school responds to the doctor's recommendations.
37. They absolutely have their own agenda. They decided what they wanted and had a plan before we entered the IEP meeting.
38. The school requests that the Pediatrician and his team at Children's to set the protocol.
39. IEP started this month and not evaluated yet.
40. There is a sense of obligatory attention, but my comments are not accurately captured in meeting minutes & I am not given an opportunity to edit/comment.
41. Outside experts often carry more weight than parents...and often have more detailed understanding than LPS school professionals.
42. Discussion occurs about my child without my knowledge.
43. Both of these statements couldn't be farther from the truth.
44. I feel the Lexington team does not like it when you bring in an outsider with different opinions. Whenever I have done it-I feel like it is not welcomed.
45. School refused to do basic things like a lunch bunch, even though other elementary schools in town have lunch bunches. School refused training from our well-respected psychologist.
46. All is fine now, but during the initial process I felt the school administration did all it could to disregard clear outside testing and put barriers in our way.
47. Again, the middle schools don't seem to be set up for parent participation.

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48. Would not reference neuropsych and physician findings within IEP until we refused to accept final IEP unless included and disregard their conclusions.

Q10. Staff and Training

1. We have been very happy with the OT at school that has made a huge difference.
2. Initially ONE of the assistants was not a good fit for my child's temperament. The assistant's interactions with my child were creating negative consequences. However, the principal recognized this and remedied the situation swiftly. This is why I chose neutral. I feel the assistant's training was not in the arena for which my child required assistance.
3. Most of the staff did NOT deal w/my child effectively, fairly or compassionately. My child was made to feel stupid, less than and entirely misunderstood. Even though my child's learning disability was clearly identified and in-depth testing showed a complex learning profile, they continued to create such unhealthy situations for my child that not only did my child suffer low self-esteem my child did anything to avoid attending class. Of great importance is the fact that no one ever called me or notified me of these behaviors. Another time, I found my child myself in a puddle of tears crammed in corner in the hallway balling his/her eyes out. By the time my child left LPS his/her entire well-being as person, let alone as a student, was extremely compromised and it has taken years for him/her recuperate.
4. One of the biggest problems that I have experienced is that IA's NEVER have the least information to effectively assist their students. I firmly think that the parents should have direct communication with them and they should be included in the IEP's meetings.
5. It is impossible to say that the work has been 'effective', when the 3 year school evaluator told there was no progress. General education staff are welcoming, not sure what is meant by "effective."
6. There were too many children in the integrated room for the general education teacher to work effectively with my child. He/she was a good teacher, but had way too many kids. My child needs a one-to-one aide and was put into a very crowded class so of course the teacher was overwhelmed.
7. The staff varies in competency with some being good and others being terrible. The team is not able to willing to work as a unit to see the child as a whole and while there are individual staff members who are good, they are unable to synthesize their knowledge of the child to bring together a whole picture of the child and thus my child is misunderstood and mistreated.
8. Good BCBA support. Ineffective special education teacher. Good support (SSI).
9. Have not had as much communication with special ed professional staff as we would like. Not because they have refused but because we haven't pushed, to date--we plan to change this in the near future.
10. Some teachers are better than others at working with my child.
11. General ed teachers understanding and sensitivity to my child's learning issues varies a great deal - impacting effective work.
12. I disagree about this when my child was younger - now, I am not aware of any special education professionals connected to my child's 504. General education teachers have not always read the plan, known about the disability, or worried about my child's needs. My child can "pass" as being fully-abled and does well academically. This is a catch-22 since my child still has a disability and has basically had to deal with it independently. It makes me disappointed in the system. There have been individual teachers who really made a difference -and for them, I am grateful. Why is it so hard for all teachers to be made aware? Especially with the vast data collection systems now in place?

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13. Most of the staff is really good but where they are bad they are out of touch. Thus my neutral response -- actually it is hit-and-miss.
14. Many specialists work well with my child, but the issue of sufficiently tracking and prompting my child on daily assignments and completion of those is not sufficiently picked up.
15. IAs can make or break a child's sense of themselves.
16. They hire 1:1 and provide no additional training. They are often not hired in time to benefit from training the week before school starts. They are still hiring after school starts but training is only offered before school starts.
17. Some educational staff work effectively and are truthful about the child's needs, others don't put the child's needs first to recommend needed services, and are not there for the welfare of the child.
18. My child no longer uses aides of any kind.
19. Not always sure how well the IA are trained when working with my child. This year there is no communication between IA and parent.
20. Two aides left our child's program recently and there is not enough supervision for students during the recess, which is the time our child needs guidance most.
21. I don't exactly know what Instructional aides - do in general - and then do for my child.
22. I think the teachers and aides at the school are phenomenal. I wasn't that happy with our speech therapist last year, so this year we switched to the other speech therapist, and my child's speech has made tremendous progress in the last few months.
23. I do not know what goes on in the classroom, and I cannot figure out how to find out. For this reason, I do not know if the SSIs are effectively trained. General and special education teachers do not seem to understand my child's specific underlying weaknesses, and especially not strengths. Accommodations on my child's IEP are always news to general ed. teachers, unless I politely let them know what helps my child. Then they thank me for letting them know, with great surprise, so it is clear that they do not read my child's IEP. Staff is not appropriately trained to understand the rudiments of what the results mean in the psychological testing, and so do not know how to use the information to provide my child with an individualized education.
24. Some classroom teachers are slow to implement accommodations and need reminding by parent or guidance counselor.
25. There are still instructional aides on staff who do not understand the basics of autism spectrum disorder communication deficits and do not maintain neutrality. They have been cited by many parents and due to nepotism, still remain on staff.
26. I do not know the aides.
27. Our child attends a "guided study" class. This has been a huge help in giving tips on getting organized, which has helped my child keep track of work much more effectively. While classroom teachers are aware of our child's situation, I have not felt that there is any special effort on their part that has been required at this point (other than offering the choice of retaking tests, but I believe that is available to all students). I expect this might change as the year progresses, and our child may need more support in the classroom.
28. I marked "disagree" as a few teachers have fallen in that category causing great conflicts. For the most part, my child's teachers have been very accommodating and supportive. But, to have a teacher tell us that "he/she

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is not used to working with kids with special needs and does not have the patience" is not acceptable. To have to move my child down a level in math because my child has a hard time with the "language" of math tests without a teacher flexible to work on that rather than the math concepts, is not acceptable.

29. I have found the speech therapist and social worker to work effectively with my child. They are in touch with me more often than the special educator, and therefore, it is more difficult to know what the special educator is doing and whether my child is really working on goals and improving in the academic areas.
30. OT and APE staff were excellent. Classroom teachers did not seem to understand as well or deeply as they needed to to teach and support my child.
31. I was not allowed to notify my child's teachers about the learning disability until the first SPED meeting which occurred on the last day of school. My child's teacher's team leader would not take the information about the learning disability until the meeting occurred.
32. See previous comments re: resource individual.
33. My child has diagnosis X. The teachers do not seem to understand the nuance of this disability beyond its effect on reading. I have found the class sizes for my child's support classes are large and therefore the pace does not always work for my child.
34. It varies by the quality of the teacher each year. Except for one year, we have had very high quality teachers. The elementary staff/team is excellent.
35. My child doesn't qualify for help from any aides - though my child qualifies for scribing on tests. My question is, if no services are provided, what is the plan to get off scribing services???
36. SSIs cannot be adequately trained to work with autism-spectrum kids, as the job requirement is a bachelor's degree in any field. They lack education, knowledge, and experience.
37. The special Ed staff is wonderful. This year my child's teacher is on leave -- we have been through this before with no problems but this time, the sub was not briefed on my child and the first three days were so awful for my child that illness was faked. The guidance counselor was helpful but swamped with more serious cases and I solved it with the sub but my child went from being so settled and happy to miserable. Why can't there be some kind of sign out of what each child requires if they are on a 504 or IEP? That seems pretty basic to me especially if the sub is a long time sub.
38. We found that the general education experience was far superior to our SPED experience. Only one of many SPED teachers actually worked for our child.
39. Some are on board - others not so much.
40. I can't tell yet. This is too new for us and I need more time.
41. The teachers could work more effectively if we had spent 10 extra minutes at the 20 minute initial eval working out a way to help my child. I was told by the Dean this is not legal. It may not be legal but it is a huge fault of the system not to help someone whose parents don't fight to qualify as special needs when the student would have hugely benefited from the experts at that meeting making suggestions to aid in learning. Apparently we only care about the students who qualify for special needs. When I asked if we could discuss ways to help as team members were leaving I was told that would be another meeting. When I asked to schedule the other meeting they said they would contact me. I asked how long before they would contact me I was told by the dean and guidance counselor 2 weeks. After 2 weeks and no contact I emailed after no response for another 2 weeks I called SPED director.

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42. This third question should have a "don't know" response option. I have no idea about the training of the instructional aides.
43. Some concerns about the fact that my child has mentioned the Support teacher frequently leaves the group alone for significant periods of time during the support session.
44. Special educational staff seem well trained, appear to be constrained by the system-- ie. saying one thing in report, then another in the meetings where they are in superior's presence, or need to 'tow the party line'.
45. No help has been given and little progress has been achieved.
46. We've had very mixed results with all of these, from superlative to awful.
47. I think it is a big change in Middle School. I am not confident they understand my child's differences and needs. This may be because there is SO little communication.
48. I'm very pleased with my child's teacher. I have no basis for judging the other questions.
49. I did not know that they had professional staff or aides available at the high school or who is interacting with my child at all.
50. I think that with a child who is not in a system wide program -the right fit must be found with the educators/specialists in order for a disaster to be avoided (as we faced last year). The classroom teacher was not effective in helping our child progress one bit and neither did the specialists. This year has been AWESOME.
51. I do not know if any of this affects my child as I have no interaction with the counselor or teachers on how the condition is being handled. My child's first quarter grades came out and they were fine so I think the administration is brushing this entire diagnosis as a non-issue at this time.
52. I think people have their own opinions and shift things as they deem fit, I am leery of what is done outside the IEP.
53. Recess and lunch aides are poorly trained. Ongoing problem for years.
54. The staff- except the OT was absolutely under the power of the head teacher. It was a disaster. The aide was a disaster. The whole thing was a disaster.
55. All of these have been offered but my child is doing so well now that we do not need all of the extra support. Also, the Teachers do a great job of making sure my child is on track when my child misses school.
56. IEP just started and I haven't interacted with staff yet.
57. In some instances, we believe the teachers have not been as accommodating as they should be. We have learned to advocate for our child throughout the process.
58. My child attends elementary school and the staff works very well with my child.
59. I am very particular and yet I am giving the highest possible marks. My child's teachers and therapists have been uniformly superb.
60. Staff has been extremely understanding of my child's needs. It seems that the 9th grade teachers in general are understanding of the adjustment to high school. I think many teachers at middle school do not appreciate my child's disability. Since my child is quiet and does not cause trouble, I think my child gets ignored as someone with a disability, and are not concerned when my child gets low grades.

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61. As with all groups of people, some staff are more effective at working with my child, whether it be a result of what they bring to the situation, or attributes of my child making resonate with some better than others. I would appreciate more recognition of this, not as a failure of some sort, but simply to more effectively determine what works best.
62. SSI tries to work but they don't have enough experience to handle the child or work effectively with the child.
63. We have had good resource room teachers and bad resource room teachers.
64. Services helpful until grade 8. Grade 8 was worse than useless.
65. Since the school is so large and so busy, my child does not always get to see personnel on a regular basis as stipulated in the IEP. The special ed classes this year are not valuable.
66. I think in at the elementary level there are some teachers who do not work well with certain populations and are afraid to ask for additional staffing, if needed.
67. It would be helpful if I could be introduced to my child's IA just once.
68. My child's aides had no training and no skills to facilitate social interactions, they acted as just babysitters monitoring behavior with no true support.
69. My child is so lucky to have been placed with amazing teachers every year. My spouse and I are so happy with the school and their thoughtful placement of my child with just the right teacher every year!
70. Again in the public school the teachers were not able to devote the time and specialized instruction my child needed. The aides were a mixed bag - some were better than others but in my child's case that model of using aides did not result in my child developing the skills needed. It only served as a band-aid.
71. I checked neutral because it all depends on the teacher/educator. Some seem to get it while others don't. In general, if the schools are going to push for keeping children with SPED needs in-district than all teachers need to be educated about the many issues that come up. This should be done on a regular basis. Otherwise, make out-of-district placement easier.
72. Often need to request of teachers that IEP accommodations be used in classroom.
73. I don't know my child's aides at all so cannot comment on their effectiveness.

Q11. Behavior Interventions--Collaboration

1. See earlier comments.
2. Should I have answered these questions based on the residential school?
3. In my particular case I have found some staff that helps and some others that don't help. Sometimes they are good, sometimes they make really bad mistakes because they are not prepared to deal, particularly, with emotional issues. So far the last two years we have had some luck and everything seems to be just fine.
4. They do not report issues to me. I find out from my child.
5. This staff will never collaborate with parents. They are too arrogant and yet sadly incompetent.
6. Good collaboration with BCBA, poor with special education teacher.
7. I wish this were the case - and I wish it had been the case throughout the experience. Again, individual teachers along the way did take the time to really help - and one school nurse was extremely helpful at the elementary level. Again, looking back, we could have used help we didn't know how to ask for...
8. We have probably the best behaviorist in the district and probably one of the best in this geographical area. He/she works hard and seems to want an open collaborative relationship where he/she can be blunt and give pointed advice for my child's sake. However, the recent threatening tenor and tone of the administration means that it is difficult to move forward in an open manner with school staff so this service is compromised.
9. The child who sat in a corner and read books throughout 2nd grade was ignored, and the child who questioned things was told he/she should get a behavioral diagnosis. Only two teachers attempted to challenge and work with my children. All other school years were wasted and devastating years in our children's young lives.
10. No collaboration, no information sharing, and no FBA done prior to writing restraints into behavior plan, and waiting until they write use of restraints into behavior plan before they begin to discuss dramatic behavior changes with us.
11. Last year-agree. This year, things seem to have fallen through cracks as 2 of my child's teachers were out most of quarter w/ health or leave and support teacher has been out with no contact with us regarding substitute plan while he/she is out.
12. My best results came from working directly with teachers. Most were interested in supporting my child's distinct needs and helping my child learn his/her strengths.
13. I don't feel like I get any new ideas or new interventions into the idea process unless I interject them.
14. I cannot get the staff to share information about classroom assessments, or specific information about how my child behaves in class. I have even asked the principal and he/she will not allow it. It seems a parent cannot accomplish much unless they become confrontational and provide written proof of their and their child's rights. It is very disheartening to work in such a system. I do not have a child with intensive needs or disruptive behavioral problems, and so I can imagine how much more difficult it is for a parent whose child has more or varied needs. My child simply does not progress academically, but because my child does not present a big behavioral problem and my child is shy, my child quietly falls through the cracks. I have taken to

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providing my child with lots of outside help (and this seems the norm from what I have heard from other parents), but this outside time is time that my child should have to socialize.

15. Following internal school discussion/decisions.
16. Our repeated attempts to contact support staff with our questions and concerns are ignored/unanswered. We are never pro-actively contacted, even though it is written into the IEP that we should receive weekly updates.
17. The teachers told us we had a disruptive child repeatedly, but were kept in the dark about his/her learning disability.
18. I do find the staff members to be willing to discuss strategies and supports; it is consistent implementation that is the problem.
19. We haven't really needed "interventions" but have had easy and cooperative responses to the occasional specific issues our child has faced with respect to the IEP.
20. CURRENT staff assigned to us collaborates well. Past BCBA did not listen to us or to outside experts who were brought in to help our child. BCBA seemed to take offense to any outside opinions even though his/her strategies were not working and we were merely trying to help the situation. BCBA admitted mistreating us (ignoring requests and suggestions) due to the outsiders that we had come in to school with us. This person is currently on staff.
21. Sometimes when I reach out.
22. They may collaborate with me, but that doesn't mean that they carry them out.
23. Thus far when we have discussed issues with teachers, they are responsive. Off team teachers seem in the dark.
24. Only if I initiate a meeting, I volunteer as much as I can to interact with the staff and visualize my child.
25. Nothing is in place since I registered my child with the high school. No communications closure has occurred and no communications on his/her progress or behavior at all.
26. One science teacher has reached out to ask me to help my child organize since being notified through the counselor of my child's condition. Other than that, I have had no interactions on my child's condition.
27. Never, and they are not open to my ideas or what works outside school.
28. This year is good. Last year classroom teacher lacked expertise and experience. Principal failed to provide adequate supports for effective supervision of students with problem behaviors including repeated bullying.
29. I have been in 3 different states with my child. 3 different school districts including private. No one can come close to Lexington. Highly organized systems and strategies in place and easy to activate. We are really impressed. The one time we had a problem it was resolved immediately.
30. They followed my child around like a criminal, watching every move my child made until my child was so demoralized that my child was sure he/she was bad at everything.
31. In the end, we believe that the emotional impairments our child deals with are not fully understood by staff. This we believe is due to a lack of education around emotional impairments that are not obvious as physical or mental impairments.

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32. The staff has been excellent when following proper protocol when my child is being disciplined.
33. High school teachers - yes Middle school teachers – no.
34. Some are better at this than others.
35. I get very mixed messages about behavior, sometimes I don't hear about incidents since they aren't a big deal and sometimes an assumption of wrongdoing is made without proper investigation -- with no follow-up when it's found my child was not involved/an instigator.
36. Not only did the district never work collaboratively with me on any kind of behavioral interventions, strategies or supports, they went so far as to purposely exclude me from their own machinations in these regards. One time the district took my child into a room and grilled my child for two hours accusing my child of wanting to kill all the teachers. They did this without notifying the parent and without any adult other than themselves present. This was because they heard overheard a private conversation between my child and a friend when they were discussing their scouting activities.
37. Last year a behavior plan was developed without our input. We found out because the plan was in our child's backpack. We did not agree with the plan and had it changed but to me no plan should be put into effect without parent's approval.
38. School refused many interventions that were tried and true at home and with other professionals outside school.
39. My child went through a very tough year emotionally last year and the staff could not have been more accommodating.

Q12. A functional behavior assessment (FBA) has been completed for my child.

1. Scheduled for this month.
2. Not in Lexington.
3. So far it is my understanding that FBA does not apply as a resource for my child's disorder even if some of the outcomes could be seen as a behavioral issue.
4. Macro-level only. No detail and follow up.
5. The school has agreed to do it, but we needed to request it first, two separate times over the course of our child's academic career.
6. At my request.
7. I had to ask for approximately 8 months before one was begun, and it took 6 months to get a report. It was extremely difficult to get them to move forward with FBA tools and data. (collecting and reporting).
8. The BCBA system is a disgrace. The concept of an SSI is the school trying to do more with less. Some of the Lexington Public School BCBA's are wonderful and some are a real waste of time.
9. I don't think so. This type of assessment could be beneficial to my child.
10. I paid for a private FBA. The school district has not done one.
11. No need for an FBA in my case.
12. Currently having a behavioral assessment.
13. How would I know? There is NO communication with me unless I prompt it!
14. I don't know what this is.
15. Not applicable for my child
16. I don't know what this FBA is but I don't think our child has had (or needed) one.
17. I don't think so
18. N/A
19. What is it?
20. Don't know, but I don't think so.
21. I am not aware of any FBA done on my child. I was supposed to be sent documentation from my child's guidance counselor who everyone at the school has informed me is my focal point contact but with no responses.
22. Again- Need more feedback.

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23. Though the person doing the FBA has NEVER done one on a student like with my child's diagnosis (they admitted it to me).
24. I have no information on what a FBA is or any communications on whether this has been done for my child.
25. We authorized in-school assessment, asked for results, and were told by K-8 SPED supervisor and principal that the report was "lost." 2011-2012 school year.
26. It was done with one observation of my child. Poor practice. The behavior that they were alleging never occurred occurred once during the FBA. RIGGED system. The behavior plan stayed the exact same however.
27. Scheduled for January 2013.
28. Don't need.
29. The district refused to perform an FBA, then refused to allow me to have an independent FBA. They took me to hearing in order to make sure that an FBA would not be performed.
30. This report showed us how sadly isolated our child was, ending more time in isolation than socializing, though my child has a social disability.

Q13. Functional Behavioral Assessments, continued

1. We are in the process of the FBA currently.
2. I was very happy with the person who came out and did the FBA or home assessment for my child. He/she was very accurate in the observations and the recommendations were exactly what I expected.
3. They did an FBA but never linked the plan to the FBA. They shared the results and certainly seemed proud of their work but as they never understood my child, they never addressed the cause of behaviors. They seemed to lack the basic understanding of ABC analysis. This programs they put in place were not only ineffectual but ultimately harmful. This was caused by in varying degrees -- staff incompetence, staff arrogance, group think, attributional bias, and a one-size-fits-all model. Their actions were at best immoral and at worse illegal.
4. The detailed data has not been yet shared with me.
5. Have only just had IEP meeting to discuss FBA report, so haven't seen behavior plan yet.
6. I am sure that there are behaviors that they are trying to control and they do FBAs to assess these behaviors but the staff is not forthcoming on this information.
7. Some FBA data was collected in the spring. The BCBA who reported on the data said that it indicated that the behavior plan was working. The plan included giving my child a break every time he/she engaged in a behavior, but the assessment tools showed that escape from demands was the #1 reason he/she engaged in the behavior. We analyzed the data ourselves, with the help of 2 behavioral consultants, and we found that the behavior was increasing in both frequency and intensity for the duration of the FBA and the BIP was NOT working. We typed up our findings and provided it to the BCBA, teacher and school administration, and after we did this, the Executive Director at the school (private day placement) forbade us to speak with anyone at the school any longer and took away our monthly clinic meetings, and is now trying to terminate our child's placement because I questioned the behavior plan and their findings from the FBA.
8. Behavior plan presented was unethical, included interventions for behaviors not demonstrated by child, BCBA continues to fail to provide data to support it. All behavior plans have not been presented to parents.
9. I was given a question and a staff member did one, and we discussed the results at the IEP meeting.
10. Seemed to be a detailed description of behaviors without in-depth analysis of specific reasons behind behaviors, patterns or trends.
11. We were never asked for input in FBA. Majority of behavior plan included isolation and or seclusion.
12. It was part of a triennial.

Q14. My child has a written behavior plan at school (to reduce problem behaviors or increase positive behaviors).

1. I really think that if the programs staff, specifically IA's, were trained to properly assist and recognize when they are pushing the students to the edge that triggers an emotional-behavioral outburst, there would not be a need for written plans. I have seen how students have to go to separate rooms "to calm down" which is just another way to put them in "timeout" that is used by people who doesn't have another resource to use. Through all those years I've been requesting a sensory diet which can help students to keep their emotions and behavior in a control and prevent the circle fatigue-failure-frustration-behaviors; but it seems to be that therapists and in general all the staff that work in the special education don't have the ability to apply this effective tool. Frequently they use it when they already are facing a behavioral problem which was the case of my child who ended up hating all the activities that ultimately helped address my child's sensory needs and look at them as a punishment.
2. This question is confusing. The IEP does mention certain behavior patterns that they are encouraging. Is that what this means?
3. For the child who questioned things, the report came back that my child was absolutely normal behaviorally; just very smart and bored, but we had wasted a year questioning my child and making my child feel like there was something wrong with him/her. The private school saved my child's life by encouraging curiosity.
4. I don't think so, would like one.
5. NA
6. Not applicable for my child.
7. I assume this is not exactly the same as IEP. I am only aware of IEP. A behavior plan should be very helpful but I don't know whether my child has one or not.
8. We were not given opportunity to discuss 504, have discussed individual interventions/accommodations with individual teachers but not aware of a larger plan.
9. Not applicable
10. Not relevant; problem is physical disability, not behavioral.
11. Again, I don't think so.
12. Nothing has been set up or communicated with me.
13. It is more a classroom plan that is followed- it works for the program though my child may have some individual kinks to it that works for my child on top of what works for the whole class.
14. At this time, my child has no behavior plan. When we moved here and provided the counselor of the condition, he/she said nothing needed to be done which was when we moved and registered for school here.
15. Unaware and certainly hope not.

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16. If you are referring to the need to take sensory breaks, the answer is yes. We also use positive reinforcers and it is through discussion with teachers that we keep them fresh and therefore motivating.
17. No plan in place this year, though in years past, yes.
18. NA
19. Not necessary.
20. Not relevant to my child.

Q15. Behavior Plans, continued

1. Some of the way behavior is addressed concern me on a social level. If the child needs to be in a separate environment in order to stay focused, placing a desk in the hallway paints a social bullseye on the child. In my humble opinion, a desk in the hallway should never be an option.
2. Unfortunately, the classroom teachers did not follow the plan and used punishment rather than the plan.
3. We are being told about the plan, but so far it doesn't seem to be working very well. Our child's latest plan went into effect about two months ago.
4. Not sure what positive reinforcement would be for a high school student? Perhaps that is why none are mentioned.
5. The school does not share this information with me.
6. BCBA fails to answer questions at IEP meetings when directly asked.
7. These comments are based on my child's in-district experience. My child has only been out of district 2 years.
8. I get updates via the quarterly progress reports. I have yet to hear from my child's resource liaison.
9. In the past, my child was given candy rewards throughout the day without my knowledge. These candies contained dyes which most likely aggravated the situation not to mention my child's food sensitivities.
10. This has been a very collaborative process and has resulted in very positive outcomes.
11. Again, not aware of this.
12. IEP started a month ago and not evaluated yet.
13. I received rare updates with daily logs merely saying the subjects of the day and was completely blind-sided at the 3-year review that our child was functioning so poorly from LPS own reports.
14. My child has a "contract" that I have no idea what it says. I email the teacher for feedback; that is my only knowledge of how things are going. The responses are very general without specifics at all.
15. While I was provided with behavior goals in the IEP, I did not receive or review a copy of the actual plan for a year. I was given some feedback on plan activities in BCBA meetings.

Q16, Timeliness of Communication

1. I was informed by a parent that my child had been "invited" to participate in an activity with another child with issue X. My child does not have this issue. I found this out three months after the fact, that my child was participating in this activity daily. Who was looking out for the needs of my very social child? I asked the guidance counselor to explain this to me, and I received the answer that my child was "privileged" to participate in this activity. In my view, my child was being exploited to meet the needs of another child without any parental consent. I am still very concerned about this. There is no written documentation about this "activity," who supervises it, what their qualifications are and why would a child would participate without any parental consent? Please look into this!
2. I have noticed that there is not a standard measure of the goals among the teachers and therapists. When I get the progress reports I got a very different way from each of them on how they fill them up. I have even had thought that they send the same report to their other students. It seems to me that they just change the name because the reports are not specific; they are vague and could apply to other students.
3. We currently receive information about this, but when our child was younger this was a big problem. Our child has been on an IEP early on in elementary school. Our child ran into emotional difficulties midway through elementary school and eventually was placed into a different program. However, we were not told about a certain district-wide program until spring of my child's 5th grade year. We did not get complete information about all of the district-wide programs offered by the town. My child had to change elementary school towards the end of 5th grade. Had we known about the various programs when my child was in 3rd or maybe even 4th grade we may have considered sending him/her then, and perhaps my child would be struggling less now. I do wish there were a more clear listing of district-wide programs for families of students with special needs so they can at least ask questions about programs that they may believe could help their children.
4. This team does not have enough knowledge to understand progress or effective rate of progress so they cannot begin to make comments on it.
5. I get the response but the concerns are not necessarily addressed.
6. This is a good survey -- I think we should have asked for better service. We felt beholden and as if it were important to accept what was given to avoid being seen as pushy Lexington parents.
7. Getting a response is challenging this year. They were better last year.
8. When I raised problems, I was told that the curriculum is set in stone and there is no way to engage a student beyond that, particularly in math.
9. Our private school is responsive. LPS administration is poor at getting back to us or the school.
10. LPS has failed to communicate with parents or responded to questions asked or provided information requested.

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11. My child no longer has a 504 or IEP. The guidance counselor at LHS was available to me when I sought him/her out and gave me their full attention when I met with them.
12. It took 2 months to get the school to complete medical evaluations from my child's doctors. My child was excluded from an afterschool activity because he/she had a doctor's appointment. Please note that this doctor's appointment was at 4:30 after school.
13. The administration is very good about responding to any emails/ calls/ concerns promptly.
14. Eventually I get a response, and usually the response is vague or (when applicable) is not consistent with Massachusetts special education laws.
15. Our repeated attempts to contact the support staff with our questions/concerns are continually ignored/unanswered. We do not even receive the weekly updates that are mandated by the IEP.
16. LPS staff blame the parent and the child. Teachers are dishonest about what they are actually doing for 504 accommodations in the classroom, and administration backs the teacher even when there is evidence to support that the accommodations were not being provided. It is endless (and a violation of the law).
17. Quarterly progress reports are really not enough. I would love to get an email from the special educator once every two weeks or even once a month letting me know what kind of progress has been achieved. I feel my child is still very dependent on the assistance he/she is getting, so I'm not sure my child is making progress with increasing independence for assignments.
18. The administration gave me no assistance in helping my child.
19. My child's IEP from the SPED individuals. All feedback comes from my child's teacher.
20. The IEP administration is very responsive.
21. Usually takes some effort. Rarely have we had everyone attend meetings to discuss my child's 504. Most recently--only one person came "because there was a lot going on" this despite taking time away from my job to attend the meeting. I don't think they take the 504 very seriously.
22. I felt intimidated by the special education department in general. At more than one meeting, I was left in tears and completely frustrated. I had no evidence that they were even doing ANYTHING to help my child, and asked for simple samples of work, etc. All I wanted was some attention for my child to address his/her learning disabilities. When I got nowhere with the SPED teacher and ETL; I tried bringing the issues to the school principal and higher in the administration. I never received satisfactory answers.
23. I receive info as the quarter ends or before a meeting.
24. Not in SPED get no help.
25. I ultimately get a response, but find the communication route, between special Ed, regular Ed and guidance very muddled.
26. At times, they often just look at each other prior to answering me. The town lawyer is always in these meetings.
27. I have asked for advance notice on testing but rarely received it.
28. It took a while to get the people to talk with me, but they did eventually.

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29. I don't think my child's been there long enough to judge this.
30. Responses have been discouraging and I am getting brushed off or ignored. Perhaps the staff is too busy with staffing all the "how great the guidance department is and what services are being provided" workshops to actually provide any services.
31. I have been brushed off by the counselor who I was told was my primary contact for this communications.
32. They chose to give their standard response and told me our child did not deserve services under a 504 plan because my child was getting good grades. Though information was given to teachers to consider most do not consider an ICAP their responsibility.
33. Responses are unkind and I feel guilty for even asking about my kid.
34. I sometimes don't agree with the response though.
35. I understand the team is stretched thin, but responses often take some time. We have sometimes run into a problem with the rigidity of the IEP, which tends to reinforce our child's rigidity. In particular, math and science help at the high school level is often inadequate, but the resources do not seem to be available to address this.
36. A response doesn't equal a plan to address the issue(s).
37. I want to make it known that NOW as of this new school year this is happening. This was in fact NOT happening when the previous administrator was part of the program. The new administrator wouldn't communicate with me and always gave me excuses. I would email and they ignored me. I would bring it up to the principal who also ignored me. I was always left out of the loop and never communicated with. Staff communicated with my child's other parent but always gave me the run around on everything?
38. Yes, but the response, in my opinion, was unreasonable and unnecessary. The administration decided to suggest mediation rather than working with me to improve the IEP. Eventually I was able to effect the necessary changes in the IEP without going to mediation.
39. I have never had the kind of cooperation described in this question.
40. It is difficult to get staff to follow through on meetings, assessments and general questions. They are always polite and empathetic but maybe overworked?
41. In 10 years of my child being on an IEP, I have sent half a dozen emails to the SPED administration – this administration has responded to NONE of them. This administrator sets the example in that department and that behavior and lack of communication trickles down to the rest of the department.
42. The only time I get an update is when I call to check in or at the annual IEP review. There have been issues at the middle school which no one contacted me about. My child's schedule was reworked and no one contacted me first for input.
43. Comments on quarterly reports are often cut and paste and sometimes blame my child for lack of progress instead of offering new strategies to make more effective progress.
44. I always felt a little removed. No one really wants to spend extra time talking to you. You are put in a time slot, that's enough now, that is definitely my impression.
45. New ETS seems far more competent than previous.
46. We have been thrilled (and surprised) by the level of communication.

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47. Teacher is responsive. Broader system wide questions take much longer.

Q17. Communication--Concerns & Questions – I feel comfortable raising concerns and questions with LPS administration/staff.

1. Depends on the topic and the nature of the question. Basic curriculum questions, safety, classroom teachers, new school- yes. IEP, special education issues- no. I don't feel that the issues will be addressed based on my experience with the special education administration staff. I simply do not trust them to administer testing, interpret data, and provide written reports that are accurate. Our experience was not positive throughout this process; that is why we have sought the care of experts independently.
2. I still feel burned by Lexington's putting up many barriers to my child getting the continuity of services he/she required, and costing us thousands of dollars in legal fees just to get them to follow the IEP/placement we had in place when we moved here. I prefer to avoid dealing with them at all costs, and dread the annual contact at IEP meetings.
3. The LPS administrator can be abrasive and unclear when we do get a reply. It doesn't feel like LPS is on the side of the student.
4. When they do reply, LPS is always combative in their reply. Always make me feel like I am the problem.
5. There is retaliation for raising concerns in the form of delayed meetings, limiting access to teachers, and even filing false child abuse reports.
6. If any concern is raised, they instantly suggest the parents are doing something wrong or there is no problem -- strange given that the concerns are raised about handwriting and reading.
7. I feel that raising concerns does not lead to constructive solutions but rather to adverse reaction.
8. In the initial period, when we raised questions or concerns, a specific elementary teacher then appeared to become hostile with the plan and our child felt very upset. We tried to find other ways to solve this, but were not successful. In elementary school, your child is very emotionally dependent on one individual general teacher. If that teacher does not support the plan, and when it becomes clear to your child, you feel trapped and awful for your child. This feels unfair since the plan is created with a team. It took time for us to learn what was happening between the teacher and our child -- and it was very sad. After that experience, our child was mortified and the idea of working with the next teacher was not comfortable for us either. We made some progress, but it shook our confidence. The transition to middle school fell between the cracks and that was also hard for our child. Again, the child depends on all adults to be doing the right thing -- and if it breaks down, the parents are not the ones in the best position to solve problems.
9. The administration has become vengeful and scary and will do or say anything to preserve their position whether right or wrong. The administration will sue a parent, child, call child services, manufacture false abuse allegations, do anything to undermine a parent from questioning them. Staff seems to genuinely try and care for my child and God knows they have moved my child forward in many ways. But the recent policy shifts from administration makes LPS overall an unsafe place for my child if I raise any questions.
10. I am very intimidated by LPS administration because when I speak up, some form of retaliation is taken that is behind the scenes but that is directed toward my child or at us. We take a stand against the bullying and threats ("if you do/don't do X, then we are going to do/not do Y") that are intended to make us give up rights or services, but the toll it is taking on our family is tremendous.
11. Fear of retaliation, or making things worse. I raise the concerns anyway, but am experiencing tremendous retaliation and deliberate actions taken by administration that are retaliatory.
12. I feel they would be vindictive if asked for something our child needed or if we questioned some of their thinking.

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13. LPS does not care for parents' or professionals' input, does not acknowledge it, does not work together with families, and does not allow time for parents'/professionals' input at end of meeting. Has never worked with family as a team. Child suffers as a consequence.
14. I feel comfortable with most teachers. I feel uncomfortable with a former administrator who had a strong opinion of services my child should/shouldn't receive without having read my child's IEP or spoken to his/her teachers. The staff person assigned to my child did nothing to assist him/her (he/she didn't even have the IEP available) when we met to decide about what to do when transitioning off of the IEP. I did receive good advice from other staff at and my child is doing wonderfully at LHS.
15. Honestly, I am tired of pushing for services. We have hired an advocate in the past to join us in meetings.
16. All concerns we brought up were disregarded.
17. I am brushed off and made to feel like there is no time. If there is fault to be assigned somewhere for something that is wrong, the blame is always applied to whomever is not in the room.
18. Concerns are met with a defensive posture and I fear being labeled a troublesome parent. They are more concerned with procedural technicality than the effectiveness of the IEP, the real progress of the child, or the child as a whole.
19. I am afraid of being considered a trouble maker and then my child's services will suffer.
20. Fear of retribution.
21. Concerned with being labeled as "problematic parent" and less collaboration thereafter.
22. Our questions and concerns are routinely ignored and go unanswered.
23. Administrators do not support the needs of my child. At a 504 yearly review meeting in spring of 2012, a LHS administrator stated that my child would not be eligible for a 504 in a year because the High School is getting more selective about eligibility for 504 plans. I will add that this administrator is not a doctor, and evaluator, nor does he/she have a crystal ball to determine the future. I still can't believe the administrator said what he/she said...
24. I feel comfortable raising concerns, especially with the dean, guidance counselor, and even principal. The special education staff/administration is harder to communicate with and more defensive when it comes to my concerns and questions.
25. IEP due to developmental delay ended but we are now trying again to ask for a meeting. We have sought an outside neuropsych exam, as suggested by school psychologist, but school is being VERY SLOW in getting back to us. Not meeting within legal 10 day period.
26. Bullying incident not effectively handled. My input was not taken into consideration regarding placement of child in same class as my child this year.
27. I called an administrator to discuss some difficulty that I had been having communicating with some of the staff. To explain to him/her that I had been trying to get one particular teacher to convey to me how my child is doing in a class (routinely- because my child was struggling). I also explained that I sent an introductory email to my child's guidance counselor & it was never replied to. The administrator responded with "well... a lot is going on with respect to your child behind the scenes that his/her "team" is working on that you are not privy to and that your child is the one who is expected to be building a relationship with his/her guidance counselor, and teachers, not you" So.. Why would I feel comfortable raising questions or concerns when I am only going to be referred to someone who doesn't reply to my

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emails?! Or told that it's not MY relationship with the guidance counselor that matters? Is it going to make any difference? Likely not...

28. Nothing happens.
29. Fear of retaliation.
30. Despite my repeated efforts to be proactive with communication, I felt that anytime I tried to raise an issue I was treated with a great deal of disrespect. For one year, SPED worked. For the others, I had a sense my child was just placed with a group of other kids with completely different issues for staffing efficiency. There was no willingness to show me what they were doing to support my child, or to show me how progress was monitored. When I tried to get answers in those "bad" years, the teaching staff seemed outright hostile and unwilling to listen. I was constantly afraid that any complaints would have the net result of even further REDUCED services, and bad placements in the future (either for my kid on an IEP or my neurotypical kids).
31. No already explained especially with psych evaluator, wrote inaccurate info and confidential info.
32. We feel completely comfortable raising concerns or questions with school staff.
33. With teachers, yes. With administration, not so much.
34. I find some staff to be very receptive, others to be dismissive and much more concerned about the needs of the LHS staff than about my child.
35. I feel that as their frustration mounts with my child, they are backing away from us. If I bring something up with them, I feel that they are getting less open to hearing me.
36. Generally- yes, but feel intimidated by what I perceive as their lack of time, and so many students so I inhibit myself from addressing as much as I would.
37. I am always worried that if a teacher disagrees with what I am saying they will take it out on my child. We tend not share information because of this.
38. I am mouthy and advocate for my child regardless of what they say or think about it!!
39. The staff involved in my child's evaluation completely disregarded our demands and ignored a lot of the information we provided them with.
40. My spouse and I have been variously talked down to, dismissed, had meetings missed by important staff, had the school system refuse aid when physician documentation strongly supported it; as noted before, had a guidance counselor put my child class where he/she was seriously injured; had my child returned to school in severe pain with no concern or oversight by guidance or teachers. I cannot wait to get my child out of this unfeeling, unresponsive, dismissive system.
41. I have the distinct impression that the staff has a "don't contact us unless you have a distinct problem" attitude and as I don't know the process for the 504/IEP at the high school, I don't know how to proceed. The guidance counselor focal point path has come to a dead end so I need to find another path soon.
42. This year with the great team and right teacher the concerns are now discussed and addressed-we all agree.
43. I feel comfortable raising issues but I don't know enough about the process here to know what to raise and the counselor has told me that there is nothing to be done on my part for this diagnosis. I am limited to waiting until I see a problem to raise issues as no one responds to me with real information.

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44. They saw the situation differently and the guidance department is not trained to make these decisions. LPS had no idea what the law was especially no idea about the new amendment passed by Congress.
45. I am made to feel like they know best, and my input is taken negatively so not even worth raising a concern.
46. Principal is defensive, blames parents and does not have effective communication skills.
47. They are like the Mafia. If you say something, it makes it worse. You know they are more powerful and have lawyers.... they tow the party line. They do not have the best interest of the children in mind... they care about the property taxes, rankings and their own reputations. It is not about working with kids of all races and classes and learning abilities. They want to separate, not integrate kids with learning disabilities into the classroom. It was a horrible experience. I know that they are happy my child is out. Nobody cares that that happened, tried to figure out why, or contacted me after I left to ask why or what happened.
48. They are just great! They respond in a timely fashion and my child's teachers make it easy for us to communicate (home phone number and home email). I try hard not to over-use or abuse the privilege. This is a group that really cares about my child.
49. Often dismissed, unfulfilled commitments made, or it may require multiple requests to get issues addressed.
50. I would not say I feel comfortable raising concerns but do so anyway. Whenever I have raised concerns with school administration i.e. the principal I have always been made to feel like the enemy. I feel much more comfortable raising my concerns with my child's team as they are much more willing to address issues and do not make me feel like the enemy.
51. The staff/teachers get defensive and we are concerned that our child will be retaliated against (yes, it has happened).
52. The only group I find not easy to work with is the LHS SPED administration. The LHS SPED administration makes it difficult to schedule a meeting to discuss a matter and tries to resolve problems via e-mail, which does not allow for complete and full explanations. Also, the sincerity of the LHS SPED administration towards families is questionable.
53. Yes in HS, in middle school he/she was totally incompetent and useless. I am comfortable with school personnel but have been treated horribly by Central personnel.
54. I don't think my concerns are heard. Talking from past experience, they do what they want regardless of what I say.
55. LPS administrators have repeatedly acted as if it was there personal mission to do the least possible things to help my child. School staff has no power, they can only control their own personal actions. Of one or two team members are completely negligent bordering on abusive, the better staff just shrugs their shoulders fully aware of the apathy and incompetence but powerless to even speak up.
56. I raise concerns and questions but did not receive satisfactory answers or explanations - again the communication between the LPS administration and us as parents was abysmal.
57. Not sure what chain of command is other than immediate point of contact when at times would like to raise broader questions of supervisors.

Q18. What aspects of special education in the district do you think are the most effective for your child's development?

1. Don't know.
2. The flexibility, the strategies developed to deal with my child's diagnosis, the willingness of the teachers to help and support my child.
3. My child has quirks that got him/her targeted in our previous town. In Lexington, my child reports that the children are aware of his/her quirks, and though they may not be interested in playing with my child, they consistently treat him/her with respect. I believe this has much to do with the school as a whole. And though my response may not be specific to special education, it affects the special education students probably more than the average student: they typically stand out more.
4. To create an independent task force to review all policies, procedures and staff related to the special education department in Lexington. Listen to parents. It is time to clean house.
5. Unfortunately the most important aspect that have helped my child or have affected his/her development is definitively the human aspect. The people around my child and how they deliver their services has a great impact in my child's development for either good or bad. I have found that some of the staff don't know what they don't know.
6. The fact that they do recognize the severity of my child's needs and do not challenge my child's need for the out-of-district placement every year. To the administration's credit, they did help me advocate for an additional therapy/ evaluation (through Lexington public schools), as this is not a strength of my child's school.
7. ABA
8. Staff that are trained in ABA.
9. 1:1 ABA work, home services for life skills, and social opportunities.
10. I think the facilities are very nice.
11. Strong team, effective therapy.
12. I do think our child's Special ED teacher tries. He/she doesn't always seem to know what to do to help my child, but he/she clearly wants to.
13. From what I hear, if your child is in a district wide program, then the team makes an effort to understand the child and has scheduled time to discuss the child. There are resources properly allocated and efficiently used.
14. One-on-one assistance.
15. Behavioral support.
16. The district has been very supportive and has not stunted with services as indicated by evaluations. Weekly communication with my child's special ed teacher is also helpful in attempting to generalize interventions between school and home.
17. The program is an excellent fit for our child, and he/she has made a tremendous amount of progress in that program. My child's team works well together and seems to "get" our child. They have a solid understanding

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of the strengths and weaknesses and are implementing appropriate interventions to address the weaker areas of functioning.

18. Teaching how to deal with social situations. Encouraging taking ownership of my child's school work.
19. Understanding a student's learning style and challenges.
20. Other parents who share information openly and suggest resources outside the school system.
21. From what I hear of the district-wide programs, there is a TEAM cohesiveness where skills are used to further move the child forward. While some programs are better than others, it is clear that there are many high caliber staff hired in Lexington and when your child is lucky enough to work with those people you feel blessed and your child is happy. For this child, when we have good staff, we feel good. When staff is weak or progress is slow, we are concerned.
22. The variability between teachers is disgraceful in a district as reputable as Lexington. There is no team leadership within the early grades, resulting in inconsistent learning across classrooms. It really matters who your teacher is. Our kindergarten teacher taught above grade-level when appropriate, but those children were bored senseless in first grade. Lexington needs to realize that both the top and the bottom intelligences have special needs. It is embarrassing that we have no gifted programs. It is common knowledge that our high test scores are not a result of our public schools: they result from family cultures that encourage outside learning and tutors. The top 25% of our elementary classrooms get tutored because the parents do not feel their children are being challenged.
23. The individual attention at school works well for my child.
24. Being out of district.
25. We were very pleased with support got in elementary school. Middle school has been a disappointment. They have provided a daily homework sheet, which has been very helpful.
26. Individual, one-on-one attention.
27. Co-taught classroom/classrooms with multiple adult educators.
28. Almost nothing at this point. At the elementary level, things were excellent. The middle school for our child has been quite detrimental.
29. Wonderful teachers and strong professionalism. My child's teacher was stellar and explained my child's perspective in early elementary school which helped in advocacy and parenting. Testing was useful in understanding why learning was difficult in early elementary school.
30. Nothing! They have had to send my child out-of-district for 11 years.
31. 1. The communication between staff and parent. 2. How well the staff knows my child. 3. The concept that we all working together as a team to create the best education plan for my child. 4. Staff's flexibility to modify given material to fit my child's needs. 5. Ability to encourage and support a happy and healthy learning environment.
32. My child is out-of-district.
33. My child had this great teacher. He/she has amazing people skills and a passion for guiding young students, and led the program effectively in coordination with our child's teachers, aides, specialists and us as parents.
34. Social skills groups.

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35. When my SPED liaison does a good job reaching out and communicating with class room teachers it makes the biggest impact on my child because he/she has executive function issues and assignments and tests tend to get lost, not written down etc. Having strategies for my child to be more organized and also knowing what might be missing or not working in class is very helpful and makes all the difference for my child's needs. We have had years where the system has worked well to help my child address his/her challenges. We have also had years when it has gone extremely poorly and it has very much depended on the SPED professional and the role they choose to take on/can take on.
36. I think the integrated pre-school is a fabulous pre-school.
37. Inclusion should always be the priority, and there should be more communication between special ed. teachers, classroom teachers, and support staff so that a child can access the general curriculum effectively.
38. One-on-one and small group tutoring in math and reading.
39. Quality of teacher and BCBA.
40. Having a guidance counselor that follows the kids for three years is helpful because they get to know them and can help to transfer information about learning styles, etc... from year to year.
41. The quality of the elementary school programs are far superior to the middle and high school programs.
42. Strong SPED person assigned to my child and following him/her all four years.
43. The "Guided Study" class has been very helpful. It has helped our child become aware of how he/she becomes distracted, and also has helped my child tremendously in becoming much more organized with his/her school papers and homework. The mere fact of our child's classroom teachers being aware of the background (due to the 504) has helped this year start off much better than previous years. We no longer have to re-invent the wheel at the beginning of the year with the new set of teachers, as there is now a basis for discussion regarding our child's background, and a much faster and clearer understanding of my child's behavior in the classroom. They knew immediately from day 1 that my child is distractable and spacey, and that helps a lot.
44. LOVE...LOVE....LOVE our school nurse, SLP!
45. I moved here for the IEP services and have never been disappointed or regretted moving our family to Lexington for this reason.
46. Caring, loving professionals are responsible for providing services.
47. Individual providers of services are very caring professionals.
48. It would be helpful if my child actually received the support listed on the IEP.
49. Following through with IEP plan.
50. 1) The IEP accommodations that are used to support my child's learning process. 2) The support and attention that is given to my child to help him/her navigate thru the huge high school has been very helpful. 3) The open lines of communication between teacher/parent thru the help of resource. I wish to commend my child's resource teacher. He/she is a great asset to the school and has been invaluable to my child's success in school.
51. NA
52. Teaching staff seems to care about giving my child the best possible learning experience.

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53. Speech and language has been especially relevant because the therapist is working on social cognition as well as continued language development. Sometimes I think the resource room services foster too much dependence. Also, my child does almost all of his/her homework in school during resource time, so he/she has not become accustomed to taking responsibility for homework at home, on his/her own. My child has not learned the true meaning of responsibility.
54. OT services have been very helpful to my child. Staff is fabulous and early intervention was key. Should continue.
55. Special education personnel are excellent.
56. My child has a health related problem that impacts mobility ...he/she has had very supportive one on one attention from the nursing staff which has been very helpful.
57. The consistency
58. Speech
59. No idea. Never had a chance.
60. The excellent teachers that my child has had over the years have been instrumental in his/her progress. My child's previous liaison was able to build a trust that helped motivate my child to do his/her best.
61. The time spent in resource and the guidance provided by the resource teacher.
62. Peers.
63. Overall, the system has been very effective.
64. Academic support .
65. The academic support class which help my child be on top of his/her work is very helpful. Reading intervention was very effective. Math Intervention, not so much for math, but ok for MCAS prep. I have found that the support staff and teachers, once we are all talking together, are very good at developing a strategy. They are also very willing to re-evaluate and try different things. Modifications to quizzes seem to be the more effective way of helping my child. I have found the annual reviews very helpful.
66. Orientation and Mobility Vision Therapy Guidance Counseling.
67. I feel the folks are in place to provide services, but I don't understand how accommodations can be made but no plan in place for getting my child to no longer need those accommodations.
68. It's helping my child to improve his/her self-control by giving my child the ability to better interact with other children, to teach my child how to control his/her pace and to focus, to increase my child's motor skills and self-confidence.
69. Not applicable for my child.
70. The quality of the special education staff is amazing to me and they are all so kind and giving- my child is responsive to them and respectful and I think that is what leads to effective [progress].
71. The principal at our school is very involved and really really knows what is happening in each class in each grade. This enables him/her to make informed helpful decisions with the parents and as a parent, you feel

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that he/she gets the issue at hand. However, the school definitely feels crowded now and that the staff are spread thin- the staff and teachers are amazing- it is just not a small neighborhood school anymore.

72. Use of resource room at LHS has been much better than our experience was in Middle School.
73. The "most effective" time we had in SPED was a year when the teacher made an effort to make sure my child was learning appropriate strategies to improve performance in the regular ed classroom. In that year, I felt that there were clear ties and collaboration between SPED and the general ed classroom. The regular ed teachers had plans well-coordinated with SPED (and applied common strategies, for example, graphic organizers for writing, other organizational strategies, etc). I wish that experience would have been our "typical" experience.
74. Placement in a school that is the least restrictive environment for my child's needs.
75. The willingness to help. To try to help a child do well in school.
76. 1) The fact that all kids (with or without IEP) receiving basic social skill training such as Superflex so they understand similar concepts. 2) The close communication between special education staff and parents. The collaboration between school and parents has been quite helpful to my child.
77. School's concerns and Planning for my children.
78. My child was transferred to a district-wide program. So far we have been impressed with the level of support they are providing my child.
79. The assistance in the classroom affords the children the opportunity for reassurance. Additional time, instruction and attention. It has help to develop independence and confidence.
80. I like the team approach - I feel there is good collaboration and communication with parents, teachers, aides, specialists.
81. Just knowing that someone we know and trust is aware and keeping an eye out for any issues that may need attention. Our guidance counselor is the gold standard in this respect.
82. Having a SPED teacher who is caring and demonstrates a positive attitude and will work as a team with parents - as we have now - As much integration as possible which we do have. Thank you for helping our child. We do appreciate it.
83. Overall we feel extremely lucky to have the support that we receive. The level of professionalism is truly outstanding. We only wish that more support were given to special needs programs to keep the quality consistently high.
84. I think that the high school's system of having a resource teacher work with a student throughout his/her high school career is helpful.
85. My child's classroom teacher has significant experience with children with diagnosis X, which is what my child has. He/she is caring, understanding, and works actively with my child and myself to keep him/her on track.
86. Quality of the instructors, both in training and in sensitivity.
87. The one-on-one help he/she was getting with the teachers.
88. My child needs specific assistance tailored to his/her needs.

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89. Participation by teachers and the willingness of the team to entertain new suggestions the teachers (regular class teachers) may have to help my child with the specific problems.
90. Small classroom size, one on one instruction, properly trained special education staff.
91. Guidance Learning Center EmPower in curriculum collaboration with parents.
92. Small group size, positive role models , reports to parents about what they are doing in class, keeping him/her happy and safe. Advocating for my child on their own.
93. My child only needs a resource teacher to aide him/her in organization and learning assistance to overcome executive functioning issues. I believe they do a good job with this and I have seen improvement in my child's grades and study habits.
94. Relationships. I know all members of the team are focused on my child's success in school and are communicating with me on a regular basis (and my child, too, now that he/she is an active member of the team).
95. The coordination of resource/speech language specialists with classroom teachers. We had a spirited discussion last year... I relied on the assessment of her LD/resource teacher as well as my child's classroom teachers. My child has done well this year, and we all agreed it was the best decision for my child's social/emotional growth as well as my child's learning style.
96. Caring teachers in both special and general ed.
97. Small classes, subject classes tailored to learning disabled students.
98. Language of expected and unexpected super friends adapting to my child's progress.
99. Elementary communication was excellent.
100. The school/district needs to take the IEP and follow it. After all it is tailored to meet the needs of that child specifically. With that being the case the correct fit of the student/the teacher/the special education staff and specialists MUST be found--if not then something needs to be found -even when the child is "typical" and just needs support. Last year there was NO support and NOT the right fit.
101. The competence of the program's ENTIRE staff. Though there is a lead teacher, there is more than one special educator who are all on the SAME page.
102. I would not know as I don't think anything is being done for my child other than my registering that he/she has been diagnosed with X.
103. They have the best teachers whose hands are tied by the slashing of staff and services each year, but they consistently work with students every day to support and guide them through to a successful high school career/graduation.
104. I think that SPED needs to partner with parents, listen to parents and be FLEXIBLE!!! I see little to no flexibility in the process, and question this.
105. More one-to-one interaction with my child.
106. OT, executive function help.
107. It was all traumatic.

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108. IEP started a month ago and not evaluated yet.
109. I think SPED is great. I just wish we had smaller classroom sizes. Less than 20 kids per class would help ALL children learn and behave better.
110. I believe the general ed Guided Study course would be more beneficial than the EF skills lessons in the resource room. It is difficult for me to ID a positive aspect as we have not experienced competent instruction and full IEP compliance.
111. I love the social groups that have been developed which my child participates in. It makes social awareness better for our child.
112. Working with the same people through middle school.
113. Continuous support and monitoring of progress - Building confidence and helping become an independent learner.
114. None. This is just a waste of time. Seems like kids are selected from different classes to keep IEP teachers occupied and at work.
115. The elementary program is ABA-based. My outside consultant has confirmed that the program is a well-executed ABA-based program. ABA is a clinically proven treatment for autism and my child responds very well to ABA programming. The program is executed by therapists, teachers and aids that are nurturing, dedicated, smart and effective. They deeply care about my child's education and well-being. I know that not all SPED teachers in the LPS have been this way. It is important to keep the quality of the teachers high because success with these kids builds a strong foundation for future success whereas failure is catastrophic and hard to reverse.
116. 1-on-1 attention to my child's learning needs; FM amplification system - wish this was used in EVERY classroom he/she participates in.
117. The program has been fantastic both as a classroom through which my child can receive an adapted relevant curriculum for his/her aptitude but also as a hub/ home through which the SSI and individual therapies are routed.
118. The ease of obtaining services. Excellent staff.
119. One-on-one assistance with math. Small group settings.
120. I think the teachers involved with my child are mostly amazing. They have great education and enthusiasm. Their knowledge is fabulous and they do their utmost to help my child and do what is best for my child. By this I mean the teachers both in the special ed department and under my child's IEP as well as his/her in class teachers.
121. Ensuring that staff know that ADHD inattentive type is a disability that affects student learning.
122. First of all, the attitude of everyone that they are there to help and have the time to help -- highly valued and I'm sure harder than it appears. Second, that everyone was well trained. Third, that the provided guidelines and forms are there to help frame the problem and structure solutions, but not a rigid proscription of what to do. That flexibility is important.
123. Some of the staff are good.

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124. Teachers have recognized our child's learning struggles and been willing to make some accommodations. Although the quality of support has not been consistent over the years, we know that teachers care and want to help.
125. My child has a specific learning disability. They only provide services to him/her on what they call communication impairment, and it appears this is geared towards 'toughening him/her up' so my child won't take it to heart when he/she is bullied in class.
126. Communication, effective assessment and change the plan as it goes instead of waiting until the IEP times arrives. Hire experience aides or put in place some kind of framework once they has some experience out of school district, they should stay in district.
127. None.
128. The resource room is great, provides a safe place for children who learn differently. The speech and language teacher is also wonderful. Both teachers are there for them emotionally as well as academics which is how it seems to play out for many of these children.
129. ICAP
130. Classroom teacher cooperation with IEP accommodations. Good specialists for PT, OT, etc.
131. The processes that are implemented for my child's individual concerns.
132. All of them.
133. The Special Education teachers are excellent and our child has made excellent progress with the team. SPED is part of the culture at school and this creates a positive and seamless transition for our child to go these programs "specials" with no negative connotations.
134. One-on-one support with social worker.
135. I wish that I knew of some.
136. Inclusion in all classes and the ability to work in the resource room with a special educator to improve reading and writing strategies (as long as this resource room time does not conflict with regular education classes).
137. The integration of special education services within the general ed curriculum as much as is practical.
138. The dedication of the SPED teachers and the IA's.
139. Wide variety of services received here that are difficult to find elsewhere.
140. Specialized programs at each elementary school so students with related issues are together. Not only does that help similarly situated children socially, but theoretically, the staff has the training needed to support them.
141. Direct services provided by a SLP have been very helpful.
142. Great staff.
143. Having a "point person" that my child trusts available at school for questions, feedback, problem-solving and reflection.

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144. Learning center, study skills and guided study support.
145. I think having a clear plan and making all teachers aware of the plan works best. At times only the classroom teacher is aware of some of the things in place but the specialist (art, music, gym etc) are not aware and they do not always follow the plans and they of course struggle the most. And I feel we are not always aware of once the new plan is in place what is working and what is not and do things need to be adjusted.
146. Behavioral supports in classroom and behavior specialist.
147. The program has been a great experience for my child.
148. Some great teachers but few and far between.
149. Resource room.
150. The one-on-one resource help and team intervention have been key for my child throughout his/her schooling.
151. I think the Tools of the Mind curriculum is excellent.
152. Teacher for the hearing impaired is outstanding.
153. The fact that my child is in a district-wide program is critical for my child's success, because the program puts in place an effective baseline of services that can be individualized for my child. In addition, the district-wide program also has trained, experienced special educators and aides that have followed my child through the program to help with consistency in services and approaches. There is also an inclusive approach which helps my child feel part of his/her overall elementary school community.
154. For my child, integration into the regular education classroom is hugely effective for my child's development. I also appreciate not only the design of the program at his school, but the pro-social, sensory-aware and collaborative environment of the school. The Principal models acceptance and inclusion and the Special Education staff that we have worked with have impressed us with their knowledge and understanding of the subtle but critical areas of concern for children with my child's diagnosis.
155. The small group reading and math have really helped my child. My child's special education teacher has been very insightful and knowledgeable regarding my child and really knows how to motivate him/her. My child has been moved a few times in terms of his/her small groups and I believe these moves maximized my child's learning.
156. District-wide program is outstanding. Dedicated teachers are committed, collaborate and communicate. Use of Social Thinking curriculum very helpful spirit of inclusion really infused in the school environment.
157. The resource teacher at Middle School is phenomenal and the sole reason my child was able to complete 8th grade. There are some great teachers who really make a difference.
158. A general ed teacher who respects and "gets" my child since they spend the most time with my child.
159. Other than the information mandated by law, I get no information from the high school special education department - no reach out at all. I get more information out of LexSEPAC than from the school, thank you!

Q19. What are one or two changes to special education that could be made to better meet the needs of your child?

1. More communication with the parent, updates, maybe daily or weekly journal.
2. A quiet, safe, monitored 'study' room to replace the desk in the hall. Requiring teachers/aids/etc. to receive proper training in how to assist a special needs child while considering the social consequences of their delivery. In grades 4-5, the children become more aware of who is different and often times the classroom treatment by the aides and teachers is a good 'tell' for them. A teacher who is sensitive to this can have a very positive impact on that child's social integration. The information these children are gathering on each other now will determine how they group themselves in middle school. If someone gets tagged as different in 5th grade, the transition to middle school can become that much more isolating for them. Thank you.
3. It is imperative that the school make sure they identify and know who and where students are who struggle specifically w/language learning disabilities like dyslexia - if you don't know who they are then you're not teaching them the way they need to be taught and they (along w/the rest of us) suffer. We need this diverse group of thinkers and learners to thrive and produce for the greater good of all of us. Children w/executive functioning and attention issues should also be identified and necessary remediation should be delivered by using scientifically proven teaching methodologies long before these kids FAIL. Waiting for failure isn't good enough. Look for signs - pro-actively preview students in the first several years of school (or new students just entering LPS) to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses to understand where the discrepancies are. This doesn't take too much - many of these students show signs very early and luckily, there's a ton of research in this area and there are specific proven methods that work.
4. Through my journey I have found that when people get to connect emotionally with children with different abilities they make a big the difference in their development. Also I have found it doesn't matter how much training or how much help there is in every classroom if all this help is not delivered in the unique personal way that should be done. I always have a dream to get all the staff trained to be motivators and begin their lessons with a little session of motivation.
5. 1) An administration that works better with the parents in representing that student's best interests. 2) An IEP process where everyone was comfortable in representing the students' best interests. Today, it is apparent that 1 or 2 senior members have already influenced the team and control the IEP. This is to a point where some team members are apparently afraid to speak.
6. Administration that truly cared for the best outcome for the student and fully supported the family in navigating the process.
7. The program needs additional 1:1 either at home or after school hours to compensate for all the distractions that occur during the school day. We find that educators try to use the same methodologies for all, but each child has a different learning style and the same methods do not always work.
8. I think the system needs to be changed. You have many great teachers and nothing to support them. It only takes a few bad teachers and one bad leader to ruin a child's school experience. The good teachers need to be encouraged to speak up and identify issues and problems. I would employ an industrial psychologist to help figure out how to solve the problems in order to protect the children of Lexington rather than a public relations person to protect the administration.
9. Social needs, social groups, more integration.

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10. Getting new out-of-district staff members that do the job full-time and are accountable to someone. Finding caring and competent professionals to fill the positions dealing with parents and children will solve a lot of problems.
11. More independent supervision and training of staff and fostering an environment that encourages teachers to speak up when they see something wrong.
12. I definitely think the IA's and General Ed teachers need more training and understanding in regards to helping students with emotional issues. Some have made disparaging comments directly to our child and some have made comments to us that indicate either frustration or lack of understanding of how our child's emotional issues affect his/her learning. Perhaps Ross Greene's "The Explosive Child" could be required reading for all LPS Staff & Faculty involved directly with children. Our experience of our child's elementary school years seems to indicate that there is definitely room for improvement for the understanding of children with emotional issues and learning disabilities. As we mentioned in an earlier response they were not communicative with us about various options in a timely manner, and we did not feel they had our child's best interest in mind when making decisions. Our child will most likely be entering HS in September and we are very concerned for his/her emotional well-being and ability to access the curriculum. We have begun discussing this with my child's team, but so far we haven't figured out what to do. We're not sure what can be done differently, but we feel it's important to mention this, as it is a big concern for us right now.
13. There needs to be a reorganization of service delivery for children who are not in these district-wide programs. There also needs to be an understanding on the parents' part that the school cannot do everything and is not legally obligated to do everything to help their child. It would be better if a team or providers could suggest outside activities and therapies that would benefit the child. There also needs to be some outside the box thinking on how to structure a program.
14. Extra aides in classroom.
15. Better academic support for a child with stronger academic skills/needs but significant behavioral challenges. There is no good support for academics at the grade level for the child that misses inclusion due to behaviors.
16. We're not very happy with the transportation. There have been a lot of changes this year, and our child now spends at least two hours a day on the van. Communication between JSC and the van driver(s), and between JSC and us, has been close to non-existent unless pushed by us. Luckily the drivers are great and are very caring, but the dispatchers are not doing a good job of communicating with drivers or parents, and the scheduling/routing decisions seem like they could be made more efficiently.
17. My child, a student at LHS, still fails to turn in work. My child's angry and frustrated with him/herself. My child's had extensive educational/psychological testing, and is on a medication, but no one in the school system has tried to understand the emotional or behavioral sides - the whole child, to help my child change his/her academic performance. "No one" includes teachers, SPED people, psychologists. It's not that the teachers and especially SPED resource people don't care about my child. SPED, guidance, teachers, and counseling could have gotten together to understand the issues my child faces, but that didn't happen. All the groups worked separately.
18. More frequent reports sent from the school to the family to explain what they are doing to serve the child's needs. Quarterly updates would be helpful. Put the burden on the school to prove that they are doing what they should be doing. Parents can't see behind a closed door.
19. More documentation of goals, progress, rate of progress and outside testing. Much of the administration worked together in Westwood which means that there are no internal checks and balances within the administration leading to further suspicion of their motives. Also it would be nice if they could tone down the arrogance, ruthlessness, vengefulness when dealing with a vulnerable population of children. We understand that resources are limited and not everyone can get what they wish for but their shocking disregard for the actual harm they do to so many children in this town to me makes their fitness to serve questionable. They

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seem more interested in hiring publicists and attorneys and outside experts to testify against children and families rather than looks for how to improve from within. There are so many things that can be done for free that they refuse such as regular email communication, monthly benchmarks, measurable goals, explanations/discussions on why a child is not progressing or regressing.

20. A gifted and talented program.
21. Change the administration. Make the administration accountable and have checks and balances. Cut down the amount of money Lexington spends on lawyers to go after parents and students and put that money back into special education.
22. Teachers and administrators need to do side by side comparisons of IEPs to see whether they keep repeating the same goals and benchmarks over and over, and how to stop re-teaching the same thing time and again. Administration taking parents feedback and doing something positive with it instead of passing it on to attorneys. Stop attacking parents who advocate for their children.
23. LPS administration looking to make early progress in our children. Administration seems to like to slow down the process.
24. Regular contact/communication (weekly or bi-weekly). More specific focus in support on study skills and organization.
25. More time for students to stay organized, visit lockers, eat, catch their breath. Scheduling of 5 resource room blocks could be more effective. Having two on Friday afternoon is not effective! Most importantly, the daily detailed tracking and checking of homework assignments and homework completion.
26. More attention should be paid to the social aspect of our child's life - how to make friends and better interact with others.
27. Have IAs who are compassionate, not IAs who are instrumental in raising the stress levels of the child. Have IAs who treat the child, (challenging as the child may be) respectfully. Don't humiliate them, don't mock them, don't keep shipping them off to the school administration for everything and nothing. The school should train staff to really understand the disability of the child and not to address issue in a punitive way but rather in a constructive manner.
28. Provide social skill building opportunities (comparable to opportunities available to typically developing children). The IEP process is flawed. At the IEP meeting the school already has a written IEP that they just want to read. No input from parents, no input from outside specialist. There should be at least two meetings; the first to discuss input from ALL sources, the second to draft an IEP (not present it).
29. Have programs that meet the needs of children in special education. Do not misclassify children under the wrong disability because LPS does not have the appropriate program for age. Children's needs are not met because of this and they are the ones who suffer by not receiving appropriate services.
30. Transition from IEP system to 504 or ICAP needs to be better managed so that trusting relationships continue in the upper levels (middle and high school). If special ed had included guidance at the table when it was time to terminate IEP it might have made for a better transition. It was shocking the lack of knowledge of my child, of the IEP or learning issues, on the part of people who were deciding my child's fate and only talking about MCAS. Guidance counselors need support for taking on the learning disability caseload. I met with the guidance counselor at LHS to explain the situation and he/she did very well in understanding my child.
31. The teachers need to be more aware of special education. My child has had many teachers who either didn't read the IEP or simply did not understand it.

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32. Lexington needs to start providing a post-secondary program for students who have finished their education but still need services (until age 22).
33.
 1. More communication with the IA directly. My child has a one-on-one IA but I have not met or talked to them yet this year. When my child was in elementary school, I talked to his/her IA almost daily and had his/her telephone number if I had questions or concerns. I would like this type of communication to continue.
 2. A way to help my child make friends with typical students, the school community in general. Learn what is the "in" way to dress, talk, and have the same interests. Help my child learn how to be in the "real" world.
34. We wish that the staff would believe that all students can be successful and that their teaching can make a difference. We were told at our first IEP meeting (only 6 weeks into the school year) that our child was just a "B" student in math even though our child had a nearly perfect MCAS score in math.
35. Better coordination of social skills support during non-academic periods (recess lunch etc.)
36. My child needs more help with executive function skills. Because teachers do not consistently post homework online, SPED staff should make sure parents have a description of the homework every night.
37. See above. Invest in high quality SPED resources and ensure that there is capacity to execute what is in the IEPs.
38. I feel that the budget constraints affect the services offered in the IEP, so services are insufficient and need to be supplemented with private therapy. This is particularly frustrating since all the experts have explained to me that the earlier intensive therapy is conducted, the better the chances for success long-term. I'm sure it depends on the particular disability, but in certain cases such as issue X like my child has, if we could invest more when they're younger, then in all likelihood there would be less need for investing in special education for those kids as they grow older. To me it would make more financial sense for the town to give my child a lot of resources early on so that my child would no longer need to be on an IEP later in his/her schooling.
39. More effective communication between staff and parents. Better training of staff to understand the special needs of children following psychological testing. Better standardization of progress monitoring methods, and IEP progress reports need to reflect the improved standardization of progress monitoring.
40. Separate the children into different groups based on their strengths and weaknesses in different subjects (like they do in 3rd grade math) and have those children taught together in the same class at a pace that meets their needs.
41. Some regular ed teachers are slow to implement accommodations or don't communicate problems to support staff (guidance, learning center, parent).
42. Change the top administrators. They have set the tone and style of keeping parents at arms-length, of total non-transparency, of making policy and program change decisions and inviting PAC input after-the fact. Further, and worse, they spend far more money on legal fees to deny services than any previous administration, which pretty much says it all in terms of their real mission, values, and concern about our children.
43. Some classroom teachers don't communicate enough with the SPED people about missing homework, poor test grade etc...
44. I want to see more socially integrated programs in the schools and as after school activities as well.
45. District-wide minimum standards of accommodations (NOT goals) for children with similar sensory impairment. Include informed and willing parents in decision making/standards setting as well as sharing across district (concerns with HIPAA can be addressed with express permission gathering).

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46. More training from SEPAC or the schools as to how I can better support my student in the home environment. I'd like to see the district rely more on internal assessments and less on external ones funded by the parents. Otherwise, students from families with less financial means have far less access to the services they need.
47. Get staff that actually responds to parents' questions and concerns. Actually provide my child with the services listed on his/her IEP.
48. My child had IEP in place, but the services were sporadic and not actually given. The IEP was only on paper and not implemented.
49. More suggestions of support services available to help child's situations. For ex. anxiety, outside list of suggestions for help.
50. More frequent communication between regular teaching staff and parents.
51. The transition program needs to improve, and the transition counselors need to be trained specifically in how to formulate measurable post-secondary goals, how to fill out the transition planning form, and how to translate the information on the transition planning form into measurable IEP goals. I also think that resource room teachers need to be trained in how to increase the responsibility of the students as they get older, how to help them organize their time (executive functioning), and how to become more independent with their assignments. They could work more closely with parents on these objectives.
52. Improve communication. When special ed staff at a school changes, it should be explained and told to the community, just as when a classroom teacher retires and is replaced. Now the comings and goings of key personnel are mysterious and unexplained. We don't know who to contact. Full disclosure would foster more good will. Timeliness is an issue. Staff needs to return phone calls and letters and emails. Finally, they need to be willing to meet with each other and with parents on a more frequent basis.
53. Teacher training regarding the specific disability is necessary. Seminars should be given for general education teachers who have children with disabilities in their classrooms.
54. Earlier testing (3rd grade) to pinpoint learning strengths and weaknesses. First testing was done in 5th grade for my child even though there was an IEP since 1st grade.
55. It would be hard to realize and probably unrealistic...but in the case of my child with X...a greater understanding by the athletic dept as to my child's limitations in physical activities ...safety issues etc .
56. One- COMMUNICATION WITH my child's PARENT!!!
57. Have a SPED department that responds in a timely manner. I submitted my report in January and had the first meeting on the last day of school in June.
58. Parents should be notified by a teacher if their child has failed an assignment or test. The resource person does not always know to help the student since he/she don't have access to the student's aspen account. On more than one occasion I found out my child failed an exam but by then it was too late to substantially do the work necessary to help improve my child's quarter grade.
59. Concerns about safety.
60. A quarterly meeting with team would be good - it all seems compartmentalized and I find myself having the same conversation with different teachers at different times. It is very difficult to schedule this regularly on my own. I had a meeting with the specialists and team leader at the beginning of the year to get modifications started on day one. This helped make the first semester better, everyone should do this. But all the teachers

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should be in the room, not just the team leader. Since that meeting, I have had to consistently remind two of the teachers about accommodations.

61. Evaluate children on an individual basis taking into account their potential. For example, our child's IQ scores are very high and the difference between his/her reading and writing ability and his/her IQ are extremely large. However, because our child tests in the Low Average range on the testing, he/she does not qualify for services. Really? We need to be looking at potential vs. performance rather than always average vs. performance. In our meeting to discuss the evaluations done by the school, it was clear that the evaluators would have liked for our child to be able to receive services because they can see from his/her classwork that our child needs it, but he/she did not technically score in the range where they can give him services. Really? My child was incredibly focused during the testing without any outside distractions. This is not how my child performs in the classroom setting. No one even disagreed about that.
62. I am happy with the way the service is provided.
63. Not applicable for my child.
64. 1. Smaller classroom size. 2. Better system in place to deal with kids on autism- spectrum.
65. Better communication about the classroom environment that my child is in- it is helpful to know about the other children and their needs and to be able to communicate with the parents in a supportive way. The way each family is isolated by themselves is not helpful.
66. Make sure that there is better communication between teachers, aides, subs, specialists for the children- even if your child is functioning well. Often, the classroom is a great safe supportive environment but that the time spent in lunch, recess, art, gym and music is less supportive and thus leads to problems that basically set back progress that has been made.
67. More timely communication from classroom teachers about issues regarding incomplete homework.
68. (1) The constantly changing administration (new ETL every year; frequent staff changes; frequent new principals) makes establishing relationships difficult. It would be nice if there was continuity, so that the administrators could know your child and understand that you were a family who cared deeply about the public schools and your child. Instead--it felt like you are a number---just the next person on a busy IEP meeting schedule. There needs to be more continuity. (2) There really needs to be an emphasis on providing consistent services for kids who do not fit neatly into a specific category (i.e., the ILP, etc). There needs to be both a plan and a method of measurement that does not exclusively depend on the quality of the SPED educator. We found that the IEP itself was useless; all that mattered was the quality of the special educator and the quality of the general educator (as well as collaboration between the two). There seemed to be little consistency (all a matter of luck). In addition, there seemed to be little reason for the level of services provided (if you are at one school; you can have one-on-one, for example, but if you're in another school and have just about the same level of issues, you might get six-on-one with a group that have very different issues).
69. Whoever is working with the child - should be conscientious of the student's grades and notify parent if something is low or lack of homework. or wherever there is a decrease some type of weekly, bi weekly or monthly report on child behavior, classwork, homework, teachers thoughts (outside of the ones the work with the student on the IEP).
70. I understand that my child have received 1:1 trainings such as superflex at school. However, I don't know what they are learning which makes it difficult for us to help reinforce at home. I heard there is a monthly newsletter that details the curriculum, but I have not yet receive one for my child.
71. Change the phrase "special education". Too much stigma.

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72. I think a time for my child to have a mini-conference with the coordinator and teacher to talk about his/her accomplishments and goals. I think this would show my child's achievements and would help my child to believe in him/herself.
73. Increase true understanding and sensitivity to SPED issues and students within the general education staff. The transition from elementary to middle school SPED and gen ed was very difficult. The gen ed staff, typically, do not have a good understanding of learning styles and disabilities, and it seems that many of them view any child on an IEP as the SPED department's concern.
74. Provide more training to SPED teachers and Specialists on teaching children with specific types of learning disabilities. Share information within the district on how to address specific learning disabilities - curriculums, best practices etc... The school does not seem to know how to address my child's learning differences. - Make sure general ed teachers view these students as having potential, do not underestimate them and give them the same work as the general ed students. The general ed teachers should feel that these students are part of their class just like all the other students. Additional suggestions: Implement Michelle Garcia Winner's curriculum - Provide lunch bunch with typical kids. - Provide organized games on playground to help social interactions. If an adult is leading, all kids will want to be involved. - Provide more training to SSIs. Make sure they understand that they should only help the child as much as they need it. Goal is for independence. - Make sure everyone you hire in SPED has a positive attitude, cares deeply about children and is warm and nurturing. These qualities make a real difference to the children - and parents too.
75. Summer school that provides a program of interventions with the goal of actually having my child make progress. The summer is the one time when a child can actually have the opportunity to make gains that his/her peers may not be making and close the significant gap that only gets wider each year.
76. Having a consistent support person rather than switching during the day.
77. Working in smaller groups, my child's groups are up to 4 children, very inefficient.
78. It is too late now, but both transitions were handled really poorly (to and from middle school). In both cases, the sending school didn't really know what was available, and the receiving school wasn't helpful until my child got there. I think consideration of a student's specific needs in assigning to a teacher would be helpful and better coordination between the SPED and regular Ed. departments (we ran into real communication problems with foreign language dept.).
79. We just moved to Lexington. I had all the records from our previous system transferred, and my child's teacher seems aware of his/her needs and able to deal with them. I have never received any formal information from, or been contacted by, a member of the administration or professional staff. I'm actually not sure if my child actually has a 504 plan; or just a diligent and excellent teacher who read all the materials we sent along. I would appreciate an active outreach by the school, because I feel like I should know who knows what - but I don't even know who to contact.
80. 1. Change in philosophical approach by the administration. Too many decisions are made based on financial considerations. 2. More consistent and frequent communication from staff.
81. The team could talk to my child's therapist on a weekly basis. I feel that they have given up.
82. They do an excellent job as far as my child's needs, and the school system partnered with us during the period of time we were working to diagnose my child's disability.
83. More tailored addressing of MCAS weakness.
84. Cut out all of the red tape. Make it easier to get the help your child needs, whether or not they meet all of the legal qualifications. Don't make it so difficult for outside placement when the school can't help the child. LPS seems to try to stall and drag things out, hoping the parent(s) will give up.

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85. If Gifted kids could be addressed if 2 E was incorporated--ie. big gap between potential and achievement-- and emotional implications NOT simply comparing to the huge "average" range for all (16% and above) being used as assessment cut off denoting effective progress.
86. Everyone follow the same IEP evaluation techniques throughout the district!! To identify the needs and let the parent know prior to an IEP meeting that may be months away, lost time for the child. SHOW SOME PROFESSIONALISM.
87. More frequent feedback from the resource teacher - a regularly scheduled email or communication to be aware of how things are going both good and bad.
88. Listen to the parents and to the outside doctors' recommendations instead of coming up with a "one size fits all" approach.
89. Perhaps additional staff to handle compliance reporting...
90. There should be an integrated classroom at the middle-school level. There were many children, like my child, who would have done much better had they been in a less restrictive classroom setting with a classroom and resource teacher. There have been such classrooms in elementary school, and should be in middle school as well. Such classes would also save the town money, as they could accommodate more children and the children could progress more quickly.
91. IEP/TPF/assessment process needs to be much more time sensitive. Transition services should include much more than just academics during the school day, but should include direct social skills teaching at informal times of day and independent living/employment supports and learning after the school day to generalize. This type of planning and action is woefully lacking. A 5th year program should exist for students that need a bridge to transition to adult life.
92. Better 504 communication.
93. Better transition from IEP to 504 if necessary rather than falling into a 504 black hole. The 504 communication at my child's school was truly terrible. I was called in to sign the 504 for the next year the last week of school and the guidance person at had not seen it and did not send it on to my child's teachers in advance. Perhaps there should be more advance scheduling for the middle school to ease that strain.
94. I haven't heard anything from the OT. Since I have other things going on and my child's classroom experience has been good, I have not had time to pursue more information. I hope to get around to it.
95. I think that when a parent provides documentation of a child's condition, that the staff should make themselves available if everyone is assigning them the responsibility of being a focal point of actually responding and walking the parent through the Lexington school system process for 504/IEPs, talking through the child's needs and making sure that some support structure is in place for any areas that need to be addressed. I Feel like I am being brushed off and am frustrated that this school system is so unresponsive to basic communications needs.
96. Make sure they are included socially - MUCH more take the extra effort to include all kids daily.
97. I think that this year the right fit of a teacher and team for my "typical" child with certain needs has been met. I feel that the district was very negligent last year with my child's IEP and needs and only addressed them when the DOE was contacted. It is very sad when a high average intelligent child with diagnosis X is pushed aside and is regressing because as my child's principal put it "it is ok not to be smart and that his/her class unfortunately for my child are highly intelligent". I think that this year's teacher has taken it upon him/herself and expertise that my child is smart and can manage at a level that is expected of his/her peers. In order to

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have effective development we need to look at the whole picture and teach to ALL students with ALL abilities. We need to look beyond the MCAS and start teaching.

98. MORE LIFE SKILLS at a younger age to help with certain integration situations. Also the integration aspect of ALL of our schools need to have a good look taken at them. By this I mean that it must be worked at better to explain to ALL children AND their parents that integration does not just mean "typical" and special needs children being brought together. It means people of all learning levels, languages, ethnic backgrounds, etc. are brought together in our classrooms, in our schools, and in our communities. It is OK to extend a hand to help someone- they are not contagious, they just learn differently than you. I do not agree that integration is so stressed in some schools, yet it is not explained or taught to a degree where people are aware. It is too bad there are less than a 1/2 dozen "typical" friends or classmates who have ever reached out to my child without fear. Too bad in such an educated community. I have lived and taken part in activities in more blue collar communities and it seems there is more of an acceptance of my child and his/her disability and that it is OK to be different.
99. I would like someone to respond to my request to sit down and talk about the support programs that are in place at the school for my child, to find out if my child needs supports in place and to know that I and the teachers are in synch with my child's needs and to help supplement deficiencies.
100. That SPED respect outside evaluations and work with parents and guidance to ensure students with documented disabilities receive accommodations that are appropriate. Not just give students an ICAP to keep the parent quiet. Until teachers are trained on how to implement them in their classrooms and that there are consequences when they do not. Train staff to interpret the reports from outside providers(i.e.neropsych evals, central auditory disorder evals etc.) to help schools use and appropriately give students accommodations for the classrooms setting. That the school system recognize and train guidance of how to interpret the ADA law and effectively use it to support a students documented disability and medical diagnosis.
101. SPED should communicate regularly to parents, and parent ideas and real team participation should be reflected in decisions. Communication is key, kindness towards people with disabled kids is key, it's uncomfortable when you feel that staff have predetermined notions and that anything you add is insignificant. When I inquire, I get harsh reactions and I don't even bother anymore, it's not worth the pain and it's certainly not worth the risk of SPED alienating me further from the team process.
102. The special education teachers are doing a great job. I can't think of anything they could be doing better.
103. Don't really know. It seems that a really good classroom teacher that knows how to communicate with the specialists and parents is critical.
104. 1. Listen to the parents 2. Diagnose properly without trying to neatly fit every child into a ready-made"program." 3. Evaluate and assess. Really use the data.
105. I honestly can think of nothing, but I also believe that Special Ed is run by professionals in Lexington and they are far better at determining needs than I would be.
106. I don't have an idea, may be after evaluation in January I will be able to suggest.
107. Nothing SPED can do...just unburden the teachers a little and make our classroom sizes smaller!
108. Teacher education as stated previously.
109. Hire trust worthy staff who are sincerely invested in the student, are willing to get to know the child and will build a partnership with parents.
110. I do wish things were handled in a more timely manner.

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111. Better communication between staff and students regarding work that needs to be completed.
112. My child does not receive individualized education. My child is in an IEP class with a group of other kids with behavioral problems. My child does not have behavioral problems but diagnosis X. My child would need to be in a smaller group (not 8-10 kids!) with similar academic needs and no behavioral problems. My child feels uncomfortable in the IEP class, feels they do not belong there, feels he/she is not benefitting from being in that class within "trouble kids". The alternative for us (apparently due to the limited budget the school has for the IEP program) is to pull my child out of the IEP, but that will cause my child to not have services.
113. Provide parents and teachers with more info about disabilities.
114. Although the teachers we've interacted with have been uniformly responsive and superb, the administration at the highest levels is often not responsive to the concerns of parents. I had a particularly bad experience when my child started at in LPS. Although my child had diagnosis X from hospitals and developmental pediatricians, the administration insisted that my child had to start in a normal classroom, fail there, then be tested and possibly move to a SPED situation in mid-November of the school year. This was a horrifying suggestion. How does one move forward after my child would be allowed to fail miserably? That scenario would undo everything we worked to do with my child prior to moving to LPS. We were able to avoid this scenario but it took a superhuman effort on my part to convince the administration that this was unacceptable. Of course, a mere 2.5hrs of testing (that's all that was needed!) revealed that my child needed to be in an ILP classroom. I've heard through the Mommy grapevine that the programs at the middle and high school are not as good as the elementary program. I have met parents whose children are struggling in the middle school programs. They have specific suggestions and they feel that they get stonewalled by the administration. Unfortunately, I am predisposed to believe them based on my own personal experience. I hope the administration learns to work with parents. Most parents respond well and have reasonable expectations when their concerns are addressed. Parents understand their kids, they read the latest research and their input can be valuable. Please understand here that I am not speaking of the teachers that I've interacted with. I am speaking of the administration.
115. More consistent and complete staffing. In past years, there were times my child's services could not be provided due to staffing constraints (resource teachers were doing school-wide assessments or MCAS testing). This year, my child's resource teacher is only at his/her school 1 day a week, so if that turns out to be a day of no school (or field trip), my child gets no service that week. It also limits when my child's resource teacher is available to speak with us (for example, not available at back-to school-night, not available for upcoming IEP team meeting). Not a big deal in the grand scheme of things, just something we need to manage around.
116. Regular and consistent communication of the mainstream curriculum (Lang Arts, Science, Social Studies, Math) so we can support it at home.
117. An online check-in/progress notes between yearly evaluations just to see any progress, concerns etc.
118. I think having a speech therapist that only comes in one day a week seeing my child who gets speech therapy twice a week is not in my child's best interests. I believe it shows the level of importance placed on my child's education and the services he/she receives. I disliked the way that I was treated when I raised this issue with the principal, how long it took to be resolved and the fact that I have communicated that I am very unhappy about this arrangement and yet he/she has not bothered to check in with me or my child to see how this arrangement is working out. It was clear to me that his/her concern was with the legality of the arrangement rather than the benefits to my child. I hate the progress reports that are given and the how unwieldy they are. It is confusing and illogical. I think the presentation of information on how my child is performing should be easily accessible to all and not require further education to understand.
119. That SPED faculty follow the law and not blow off parents. (please see previous comments).

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120. We had a very good experience.
121. Having IEP team leaders who actually know the students.
122. Less adversarial relationships.
123. Boost supports for math & science starting at a young age with numeracy, numerical values, etc. number line reinforcement, life skills math (esp. by high school.) Increase consistency of language learning and other supports from year to year and implement meaningful assessments and measurable goals--instead of jargon (i.e. will be able to decode multi-syllabic words in 3 out of 4 occasions, a quote from one of our child's early IEPs -- but was anyone really measuring? and in what contexts? We were never informed.) Also, help children with self-advocacy and awareness skills -- esp. those who feel stigmatized and reluctant to get help or feel different. Normalize their experience for them (applies especially to kids with moderate special needs.)
124. More communication from teachers and support teachers about problems before it is too late.
125. Access to a resource room that would help him build strategies and strengths in executive function, organization, and integration.
126. Help in science and math areas are woefully inadequate. Most resource room teachers can't help in these areas when it comes to content. More is needed to help students prepare for an exam. More is needed to help students self-advocate in the area of metacognition -- understanding what they are good at and what they are bad at.
127. Hire qualified and subject specific IAs. Educate general ed teachers about students on IEP.
128. Last year was good but in general I find that the special education administrators are lacking sensitivity about what it is like for your child to be in a system that does not teach them appropriately, where each day is a tiring struggle for them. The teachers that work with these children are completely sensitive and I have no complaints there.
129. To stop trying everything they can to deny services to kids needing them.
130. IEP team should have the final say for a recommendation in an IEP. Twice an administrator vetoed recommendations made by the IEP team.
131. I cannot think of any.
132. They need more resources.
133. Give teachers and counselors appropriate time to do what IEP stipulates.
134. Replace staff at central HQ.
135. Have teacher be there for student to come after school or before so that they don't have to miss out on elective classes. Have a more effective way of students to be clear about homework and projects.
136. Transition planning, goal-setting, transition assessments, and implementation of transition services.
137. Properly aligning district-wide elementary programs so that they lead into the corresponding middle school, so as to avoid a scenario where children with challenges with social ability and vulnerabilities are required to leave their familiar peers in order to access the corresponding district-wide program at the middle-school level, assigning a professional to the team who has an understanding of the emotional needs of children, not just BCBA's and special educators; many of these children have varying degrees of anxiety, which could be

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- alleviated to some extent by a compassionate professional (social worker, psychologist) trained to offer expert assistance on an ongoing basis, not only when a crisis arises. Longer blocks of time for IEP meetings.
138. It is very difficult for one resource teacher with their increased and intense work load, as well as their limited time, to reach the specific needs of each SPED student in a group.
139. More consistent reports of exercises performed in school that can be repeated at home.
140. Better communication of what exactly they're doing with him in school so that I can reinforce it at home. Direct communication with the IAs instead of having to go through the program director.
141. Increase communication and invitation to observe for a day.
142. More frequent communication w/ parents.
143. Lower case load for overworked SPED staff.
144. NO restraint, NO seclusion. Having a parent advocate FROM the school to help guide parents through difficulties in working with the school system, esp. at times of disagreement between parents and school staff.
145. Educating all teachers (not just core class teachers, but also language and other elective classes) to work better with a child with special needs, whether they have an IEP or 504 accommodations. It is not consistent across all teachers. My child is now in middle school and his/her guidance counselor says that foreign language teachers do not have the education to work with children with special needs nor is it enforced that they should make any accommodations.
146. I also find the plan impossible to read and I feel that form should be updated so it is more user friendly. There should be an easy to follow summary page. Better communication.
147. More therapeutic groups and counseling supports.
148. 1. More programming for social development and friends. 1. Improved summer programming to meet needs of larger % of special needs children; partnering with town resources e.g. the rec dept or Hayden to offer summer programming that goes beyond remedial academics. This is a significant deficit in Lexington SPED services! 2. Continue to improve the training and status of Instructional assistants. Retention of quality IA's has been a chronic problem- children have had different IA's every year- with very mixed results- new staff with learning curves increase transition difficulties each fall for many students.
149. Professionalism in ETS staff. Many times we were told that things were denied based on an ETS feelings. Accountability for staff, not only to parents but to each other.
150. Timely communication and follow through.
151. I wish there could be more aides in the classrooms but understand that this is a luxury. Plus, as I've told my child time and again, the teachers know the caliber of work that you are capable of doing. Despite my child's diagnosis and focusing issues, my child is an A/B student. Much of it, of course, is my child's own doing but a really supporting education environment and team plays very heavily into this as well.
152. I would love more regular communication with my child's classroom teacher about how the week has gone. Even just a simple checklist form would be so helpful and informative, since it is very difficult to get much information from my child. I am eager to work collaboratively with the teachers, and it would be helpful to have a little bit more information on a weekly basis (even one sentence!) about what is something we should be working on at home, based on how things are going in the classroom.

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153. Better-qualified testers. When they get a result they don't understand they should delve deeper or seek help from others who are more qualified. In my child's case they threw up their hands and said it must be an aberration because they couldn't understand it. Later we did outside testing and that tester was able to determine what the disability was.
154. Increase sensitivity and understanding of administration, principals, and teachers to the needs of the hearing impaired. It is painfully obvious that principals are charged by the administration with denying services and denying need despite testing and documentation from medical professionals. This is scandalous and needs to change. Once a plan is in place the services are excellent, but getting a plan initially is a battle.
155. 1) Increased training and supervision for aides--this hasn't been a problem for my child, but I have heard of multiple cases where inadequately trained or poorly supervised aides have led to breakdowns in delivery and quality of services. 2) More transparency and information from LPS administration regarding programs and approaches. More information available on the LPS Web site regarding special education overall. 3) An increased focus on implementing best practices and working to make improvements where there are gaps, and faster progress on these fronts. There is sometimes too much focus on just meeting legal requirements rather than working to establish best practices. And increasing the speed at which improvements are made when a gap is recognized. 4) Ensuring that there is always an effort made to work with parents before pushing for mediation and legal options. I have not had this experience myself, but have heard about multiple cases where parents were willing to work to a compromise before seeking mediation or legal routes, but LPS administration was not willing to work with parents on a solution.
156. Occupational therapy is understaffed, child's services are doubled up with children of vastly different ages.
157. Reduce emphasis on fear of litigation: genuine communication regarding child's progress or lack thereof is obfuscated by need to monitor all teacher communication by administration. More consistency in OT services across schools - better supervision of cota by actual OT's.
158. The teachers need to be trained in the technology and other areas where they can provide assistance to meet the child's needs. Starting with upper administration the communication and response to parents needs to improve dramatically.
159. Better communication- before making changes to a child's schedule the parent should have input and be contacted first. Tests given to a child should be explained in detail to the parent. And SPED providers should have offices with phones! Good grief. (But I think that is an overall technology issue throughout the middle schools).
160. School - Parent Communication: Provide information about department and list of people who are accountable and available for questions for IEP services for your child not just the people who work with your child. The website information doesn't tell chain of command relative to people who work directly with my child. Provide some kind of inclusive letter/statement to teachers/parents at beginning of year to make sure everyone on board with IEP requirements. This may happen between special education dept and teachers already but it would be great to be included to know that the teachers have been notified and on board with accommodations.
161. Weekly or bi-weekly feedback through email directly to the parent about the child's progress. I always felt removed about my child's experiences through each semester, and only got feedback at the time of conferences, and at IEP meetings. Luckily I am not a micromanager, that would have driven me crazy if I was.
162. More breakdown of tasks, deadlines.
163. We wish there were more opportunities for social support for our child.
164. There is a structured methodology for handling my child's developmental issues. The special educators did seem to know my child reasonably well. They did attempt to partner with us for her development.

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165. Writing, organizational and additional support block.

166. There seems to be a real interest in giving the child the supports he/she needs. While we do not think the placement they selected for our child is the right one for him/her, we absolutely respect and appreciate the approach being taken by the district, to start in a gen ed classroom and then potentially work from there. We have found the communication and sense of TEAM very impressive here.

Comments Removed to Ensure Confidentiality

Q6. Placement/Services Delivery for Children with an IEP

1. One parent wrote about physical abuse to her child by an aide due to lack of training and supervision. Comment removed because school and teacher names were included, and details of the incident could have identified the parent and student.

Q8. How often do you interact with teachers and other Lexington Public School professionals regarding your child?

1. One parent detailed issues regarding lack of accommodations for his/her child after the child was injured in a class the parent had requested their child be removed from. Comment removed because details could have identified the parent and student.

Q9. Partnering with Parents/Outside Experts

1. One parent wrote in detail about poor communication and meeting management at the middle school after submitting a report from an outside expert. This comment included descriptions of multiple meetings canceled without notice, unclear decision-making processes, decisions made outside of team meetings, lack of communication between staff members, and delaying of the overall SPED process until the end of the school year, at which time the parent had to begin the process over with different LPS team members. Comment removed because details included name of school and could have identified the parent and student.

Q17. Communication--Concerns & Questions – I feel comfortable raising concerns and questions with LPS administration/staff.

1. One parent wrote to commend the staff members at the elementary school level for their speed and effectiveness. Comment removed because specific staff members were named.
2. Parent expressed concern about retaliation from staff when parents complain. Parent detailed an incident where a staff member got very angry at a parent after the parent expressed concern about the cleanliness of a pool used by young students. Comment removed because details could have identified the school, staff members, parent, and student.
3. Parent expressed concern about retaliation through the use of DCF complaints against parents who allege abuse by LPS staff members. Comment removed because details could have identified the parent and student.

Q19. What are one or two changes to special education that could be made to better meet the needs of your child?

1. One parent wrote about making field trips accessible for students with disabilities and mobility issues, and about lack of access for students with mobility issues at the high school during winter weather. Comment removed because details could have identified parent and student.
2. One parent expressed concern about the losing trust in LPS staff after an aide did not report accurately on a child's emotional state and eating habits at school. Comment removed because details could have identified parent, student, and staff member.