Expanding and Strengthening Best-Practice Supports for Struggling Students

Board of Education Meeting
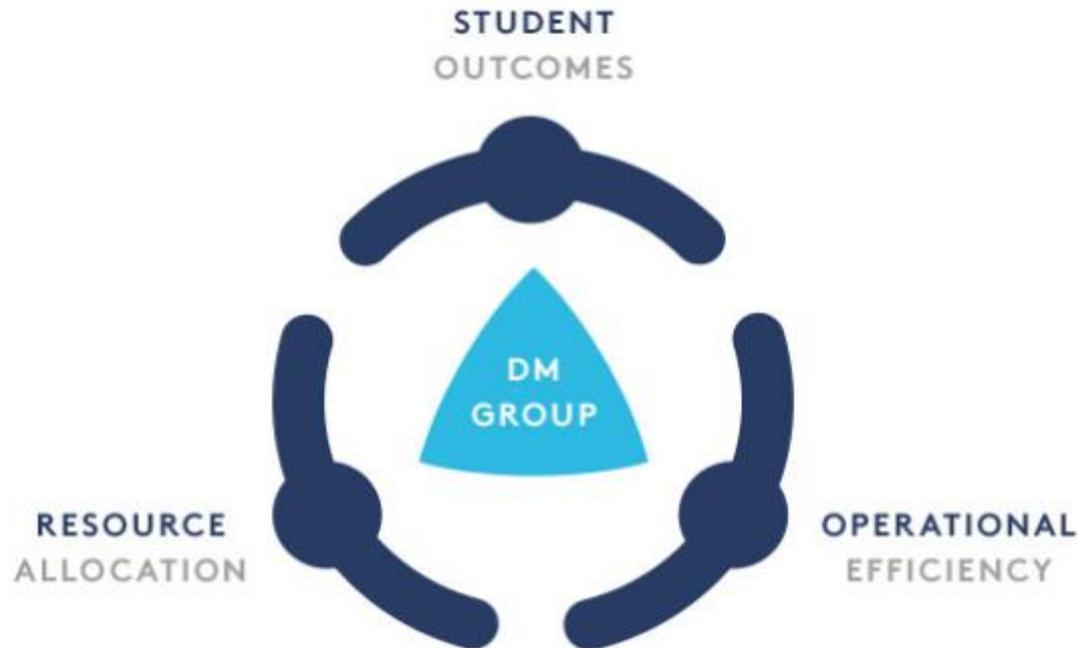
December 7th, 2017

District Management Group | Helping Schools and Students Thrive

Our mission is to achieve systemic improvement in public education by combining management techniques and education best practices.

DMGroup's Mission

We believe that a district must focus on meeting all three of
these objectives to achieve lasting results for students.

DMGroup believes that a well-coordinated system can raise achievement for students who struggle, while managing costs.

DMGroup's Philosophy

- ☑ It is possible for school districts to raise achievement for students who struggle and manage costs at the same time

- ☑ In order to accomplish this, school districts need an integrated set of services and tools:
  - Better information (what do staff do?)
  - Best practices (what should staff do?)
  - Staffing guidelines (how should staff implement best practices?)

- ☑ General education is a big part of the answer

- ☑ Every district is different; culture and context matter

- ☑ No student ever benefited from a consultant's report. They benefit from meaningful changes in the classroom, which take sustained efforts over multiple years

District Management Group

The district has experienced a steady increase in special education spending over the past several years.

Spending on Special Education Certified Staff
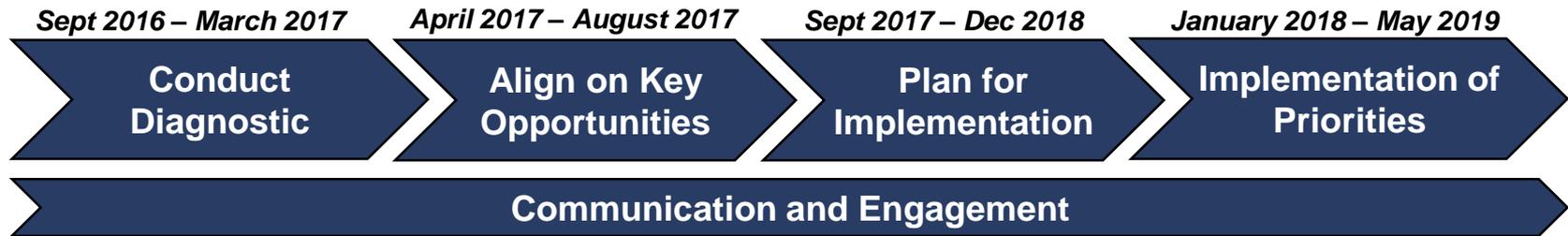*Certified and Non-certified Staff (SY 2010 – 2016)*
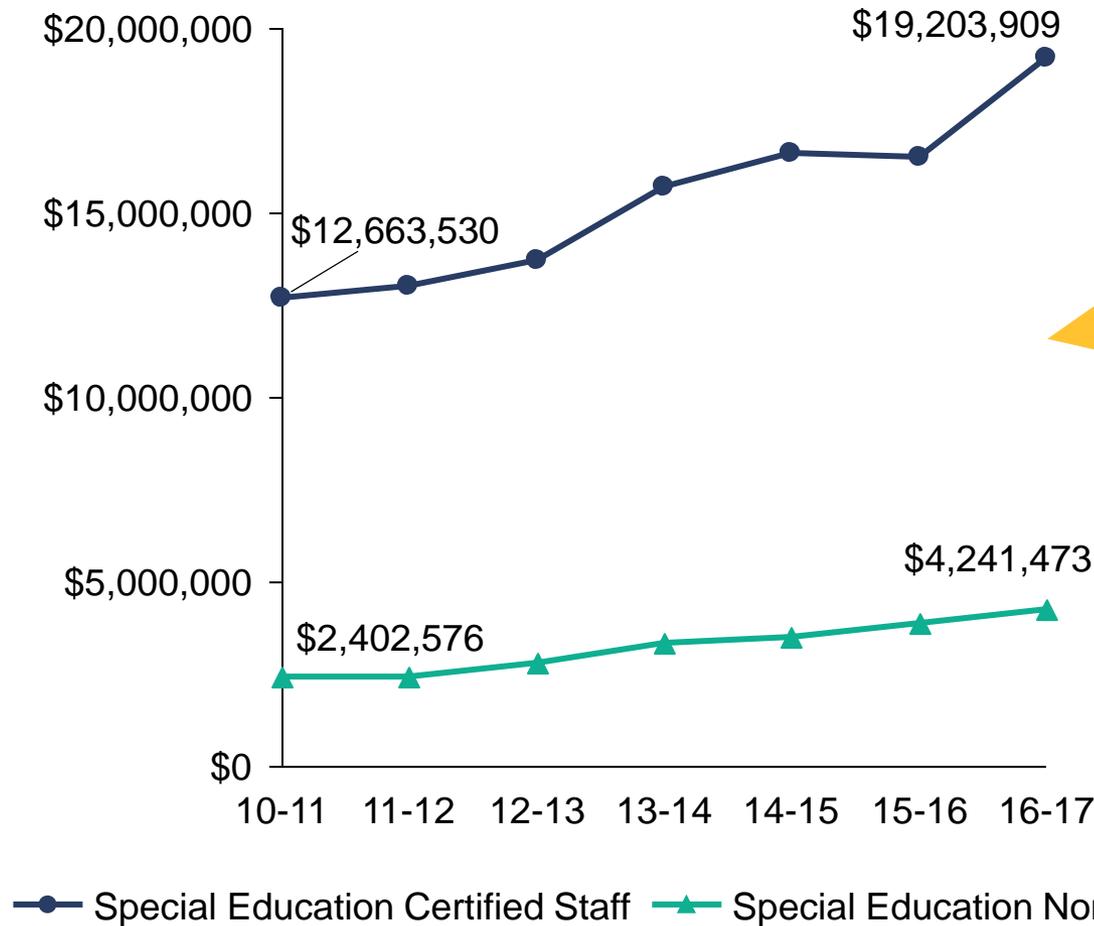
From SY 2010-11 to SY 2016-17, spending on special education certified staff has increased on average 7% per year and spending on special education non-certified staff has increased on average 10% per year.

Legend:
- Special Education Certified Staff
- Special Education Non-Certified Staff

Data labels: $12,663,530; $19,203,909; $2,402,576; $4,241,473

South Washington County Schools is engaging in a multiyear partnership with DMGroup to improve supports for struggling students.

DMGroup Project Overview

Sept 2016 – March 2017	*April 2017 – August 2017*	*Sept 2017 – Dec 2018*	*January 2018 – May 2019*
Conduct Diagnostic	**Align on Key Opportunities**	**Plan for Implementation**	**Implementation of Priorities**

Communication and Engagement

1 Establish goals and assemble Guiding Coalition

2 Share research on best practice and gather data on current practices

3 Provide diagnostic highlighting strengths and preliminary areas of opportunity

4 Align on initial opportunities

5 Develop district priorities (based off of initial opportunities)

6 Define a vision for success

7 Set milestones & goals

8 Develop action plans

9 Develop monitoring plan

10 Pilot new vision for service delivery model, and monitor and refine plan on a consistent basis

District Management Group

During the diagnostic phase, DMGroup collected detailed quantitative and qualitative data on current district practices.

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District Management Group

The diagnostic combined significant qualitative evidence and robust data analysis to build understanding of current service delivery models.

Diagnostic Methodology

Qualitative Evidence

- Interviews with district leaders

- Focus groups with staff
  - General education
  - Special education
  - Interventionists
  - Related services
  - Social-emotional support

- Classroom observations

Key Findings:

Highest leverage opportunities

Data Analysis

- National benchmarking

- Staff schedule sharing

- Data analysis to address the following key issues:
  - What percentage of service to struggling students is push-in vs. pull-out or co-teaching?
  - How much time is devoted to supporting students directly?
  - What topics are being supported?
 - How many students are being supported at a time?

Through DMGroup's online tool, schedules for a typical week were collected from staff members to understand how students are supported.

Diagnostic – Staff Schedule Sharing

1. *Staff entered their typical weekly schedule into the web-based technology tool during the week of 11/28/16*

- *The majority of staff members who were asked to share their schedules did so (86%).*
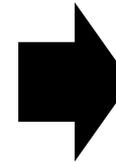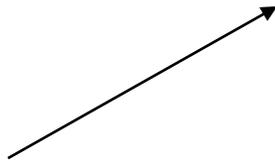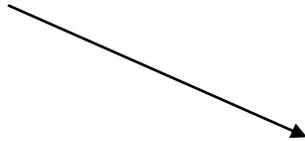
2. DMGroup analyzed schedules, highlighted trends, and compared with best practice.

Four key preliminary opportunities were identified through the diagnostic process.

Opportunities for Consideration

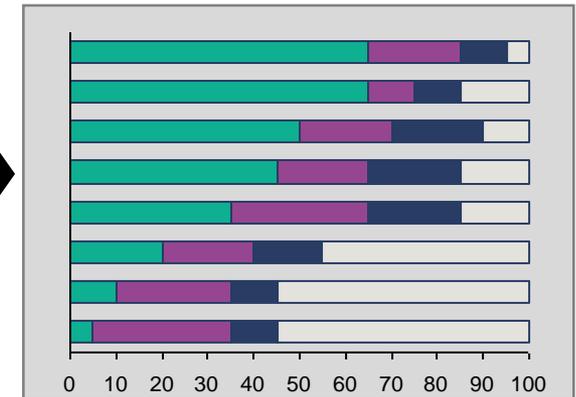**1** Develop a district-wide approach to elementary literacy to ensure all students have access to balanced core literacy instruction, and that struggling readers receive additional time in targeted interventions.

1a Ensure consistency in the amount of time dedicated to the core literacy block across the elementary schools, with aligned resources and supports for teachers.

1b Provide all struggling readers with additional time in targeted interventions by expanding the Response to Intervention (RTI) model.

2 Ensure supports for students with mild-to-moderate special needs and other struggling learners are provided by staff with deep content expertise and training.

3 Expand social, emotional and behavioral supports by increasing direct services to students and providing more strategies to teachers.

4 Expand the reach of related service providers through thoughtful scheduling and clear guidelines for service delivery models and use of practitioner time.

The DMG Guiding Coalition led the process of aligning on key opportunities, developing priorities, and defining a vision for success.

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7 Set milestones & goals

10 Pilot new vision for service delivery model, and monitor and refine plan on a consistent basis

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The Guiding Coalition identified 3 priority areas for improving supports for struggling students across special education and general education.

3 Priority Areas

1

At the elementary and secondary levels, refine the special education service delivery model to ensure all students with mild-to-moderate special needs receive additional time support with content-strong staff.

2

Strengthen elementary literacy, by ensuring consistency in the amount of time dedicated to the core literacy block across the elementary schools, with aligned resources and supports for teachers.

3

At the secondary level, provide all struggling students with additional time in targeted interventions with a content-strong teacher via the Response to Intervention (RTI) model.

District Management Group

The Guiding Coalition has begun to plan for implementation; key next step include continuing planning work and developing a monitoring plan.

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Current focus

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District Management Group

The elementary special education group is focused on refining the role of paraprofessionals and creating guidelines for strategically grouping students.

Elementary Special Education Action Plan

What is our vision?

Refine the special education service delivery model to ensure all students with mild-to-moderate special needs receive additional time support with content-strong staff.

What is the outcome?

By September 2018 the district will have:
- Established clear expectations and responsibilities for paraprofessionals, with 75% of paraprofessionals eventually providing behavior support
- Established group size guidelines for mild-to-moderate special education staff and will be scheduling students in a strategic and effective manner.

How will we get there?

February 2018	May 2018	August 2018
• In-depth understanding of IEP data, paraprofessional schedules, and special education teacher schedules	• Clear expectations and guidelines for paraprofessionals established • Clear guidelines for group size for mild-to-moderate special education teachers established • Guidelines communicated to impacted staff at pilot schools	• Paraprofessionals scheduled to support behavior • Mild-to-moderate special education staff scheduled to implement group size guidelines • School send out communication to parents

The secondary special education work aims to ensure all students with IEPs receive additional time in their area of need with a content-strong teacher.

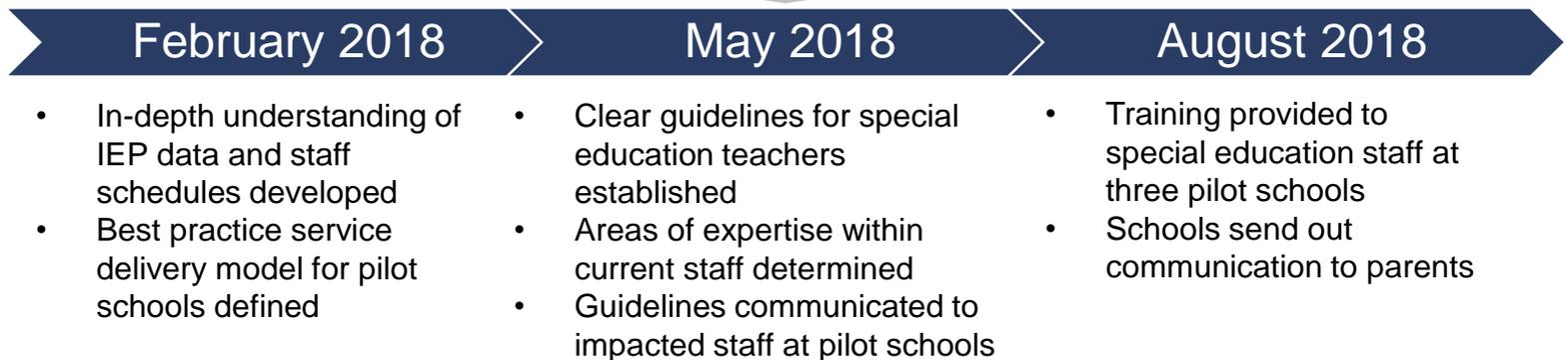## Secondary Special Education Action Plan

What is our vision?

Refine the special education service delivery model to ensure all students with mild-to-moderate special needs receive additional time support with content-strong staff.

What is the outcome?

By September 2018 the district will have:
- Established a service delivery model in which students are receiving a double dose of their area of need by content-strong staff members outside of the core classroom.
- Specialized special education teachers in content areas such as reading, math, and case management, based on demonstrated expertise.

How will we get there?

February 2018	May 2018	August 2018
• In-depth understanding of IEP data and staff schedules developed • Best practice service delivery model for pilot schools defined	• Clear guidelines for special education teachers established • Areas of expertise within current staff determined • Guidelines communicated to impacted staff at pilot schools	• Training provided to special education staff at three pilot schools • Schools send out communication to parents

The district's priority for elementary literacy is to guarantee all students receive 90 minutes of core literacy plus 30 minutes tailored to student need.

Elementary Literacy Action Plan
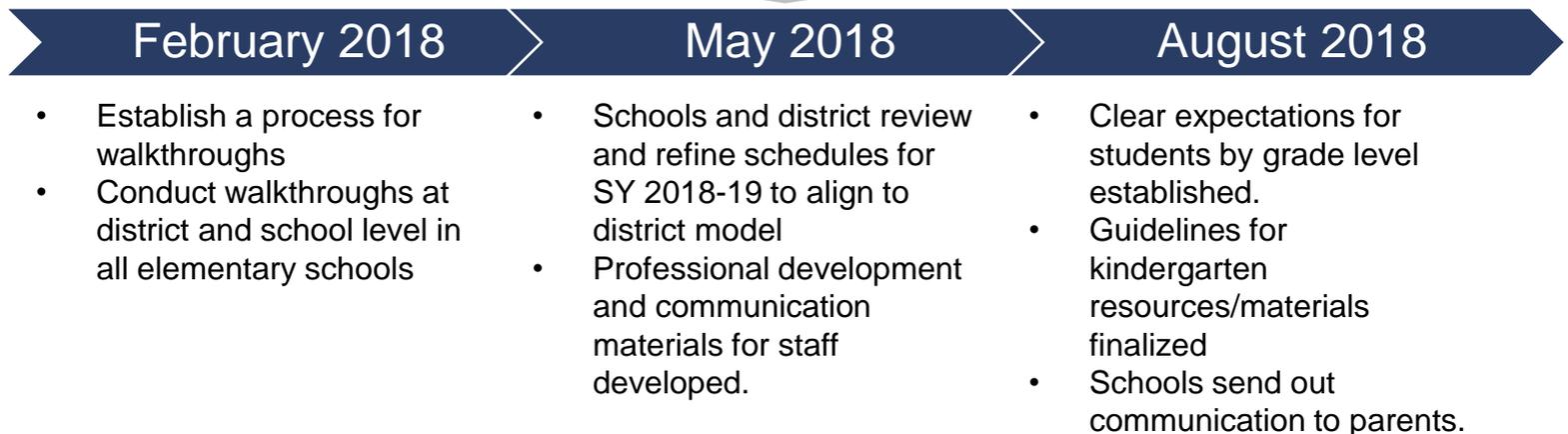
What is our vision?

Strengthen elementary literacy, by ensuring consistency in the amount of time dedicated to the core literacy block across the elementary schools, with aligned resources and supports for teachers.

What is the outcome?

By September 2018:
- **All elementary schools:** Uninterrupted core 90 minute literacy block and a 30 minute additional literacy time. All schools will be implementing balanced literacy.
- **Hillside and Pine Hill (pilot schools):** Using formative data to flexibly group students during 30 minute additional literacy block in at least one grade level. Materials and resources will be aligned across grade levels.

How will we get there?

February 2018	May 2018	August 2018
• Establish a process for walkthroughs • Conduct walkthroughs at district and school level in all elementary schools	• Schools and district review and refine schedules for SY 2018-19 to align to district model • Professional development and communication materials for staff developed.	• Clear expectations for students by grade level established. • Guidelines for kindergarten resources/materials finalized • Schools send out communication to parents.

Hillside and Pine Hill are piloting a refined master schedule this year, with 90 minutes of daily literacy and additional time for intervention.

Pine Hill Master Schedule: Key Features

Core reading block is protected time for all students

Time is allocated in the schedule for students to receive additional support matched to need

Intervention blocks are staggered across grades to allow interventionists to reach all grade levels

At the secondary level, three schools will pilot a best practice RTI model in SY2018-19.

Secondary RTI Action Plan

What is our vision?

At the secondary level, provide all struggling students with additional time in targeted interventions with a content-strong teacher via the Response to Intervention (RTI) model.

What is the outcome?

By September 2018:
- **Park High, Woodbury High, and Woodbury Middle** will pilot a refined literacy RTI model in which:
  - Data will be used to provide timely interventions matched to student need
  - Teachers understand and access research-based interventions and strategies

How will we get there?

February 2018	May 2018	August 2018
• Current status of RTI in secondary schools assessed • District-wide entrance and exit criteria defined • Best practice RTI model for 3 pilot schools defined	• Data tracking system and protocols developed • School data team identified and trained • Intervention staffing needs determined	• RTI model finalized and communicated • Interventionists identified and PD provided • Best practice curriculum and resources provided to interventionists

Key next steps include developing a monitoring plan and implementing a refined service delivery model in SY 2017-18 and beyond.

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Next Steps

Q + A

District Management Group

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Helping Schools and Students Thrive

If you have any comments or questions about the contents of this document, please contact District Management Group:

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