



District Management Council's Report

Special Education Opportunities and
Struggling Students Review

January 18, 2012

Presentation Format

- o Introduction
- o Process
- o Commendations
- o Opportunities
- o Cost Savings Opportunities
- o Next Steps

Introduction

- o Review focused on the academic achievement of students and the cost effectiveness of limited financial resources.
- o Review provides a road map to help move the district to the next level of performance for struggling students
- o Review compares current district practices to best practices
- o Review highlights strengths and pinpoints six interrelated opportunities to increase student achievement and reduce costs.

Process

- o In-person interviews of stakeholders
- o On-line surveys to stakeholders
- o 1-2 hour visits to each school
- o Day of sharing with interviewed stakeholders
- o Retreat Day with administrators

Commendations

- Inclusion is embraced in both theory and practice.

Commendation 2

- o Staff have a passion and commitment to ensuring that students with special needs achieve academically, socially, and emotionally at high levels.

Commendation 3

- o The district has made significant effort to develop a research-based, district-wide elementary literacy curriculum

Commendation 4

- o The district's identification rate for special education is below the state average.

Commendation 5

- Reading intervention from content expert teachers is available for some students who struggle.

Commendation 6

- o The district has a system of formative assessments in many grades and subjects.

Commendation 7

- Read 180 is available as an intervention for struggling readers at the secondary level.

Opportunity 1

- o Implement on a consistent basis the district-wide core elementary reading curriculum supplemented by a robust intervention effort.
 - o 1a. Review the implementation of the district's core reading program at each school and develop a common vision for literacy instruction collaboratively with principals.
 - o 1b. Expand access to trained reading interventionists for all students who struggle by shifting existing resources.
 - o 1c. Provide more consistent in-school opportunities for all students who struggle to receive extra time on task.
 - o 1d. Review the effectiveness of "replacement" reading curricula to support the most struggling students.

Potential Impact

- o Currently district spends \$9.4 million on special needs and struggling students in elementary.
- o 18 Reading interventionists needed to support struggling readers in elementary. Cost \$1.5 million.
- o Some of the \$9.4 million could be repurposed to support a robust, best-practice intervention program.

Opportunity 2

- o Rethink support for struggling students, with and without IEPs, at the secondary level.
 - o 2a. Provide in-school opportunities for all students who struggle to receive extra time on task.
 - o 2b. Reconsider the value of resource rooms.
 - o 2c. Evaluate the effectiveness of the leveling system for supporting struggling students.

Implementation for 2013

- o Middle and High School presentations are addressing some of these issues

Opportunity 3

- o Expand the number of specialized programs for students with significant needs.
 - o 3a. Review the needs of students currently out of district to identify additional opportunities to serve more children in district.
 - o 3b. Explore new options to better serve students with autism and cognitive impairments.

Financial Impact

- o Develop a high level high school program for ED students.
- o If 5 ED students could be returned to a district program the net savings would be about \$200K.
- o Could do this without stress on facility.
- o Expansion of in-district autism and other self-contained programs is not feasible at this time due to space issues.

Opportunity 4

- o Provide more inclusion options district-wide.
 - o 4a. Reconsider the effectiveness of co-teaching.
 - o 4b. Create a wider range of inclusion options.

Action

- o Elementary principals have formed a PLC along with Supervisor of Special Services to examine other methods of inclusion.
- o May be able to pilot some alternatives in 2012-2013.

Opportunity 5

- o Develop a strategic budgeting process for special education.
 - o 5a. Determine what financial and staffing information would be valuable to which stakeholders and when.
 - o 5b. Establish roles and responsibilities for special education budget development and staffing.
 - o 5c. Establish staffing guidelines based on student needs.

Action

- o There is no cost to this opportunity.
- o Possible savings of \$500K-\$1 million long term.
- o Work with superintendent and SLT to design and articulate a process.

Opportunity 6

- o Develop a shared understanding of roles, responsibilities and decision-making with respect to special education and struggling students.
 - o 6a. Develop a common vision and establish a way “things are done” in the district.,
 - o 6b. Establish more formal collaboration and greater alignment between special education and other central office departments.
 - o 6c. Define clear roles and responsibilities for each central office department and the role of the principals.

Action

- o Meetings between principals, C&I and Special Services to clarify help to “struggling students.”

Next Steps

- o Administrators felt opportunity 4 *Provide more inclusion options district-wide* was the next place to go as a group.
- o An administrative PLC has been formed to look at other ways inclusion is provided. Ways which could include more struggling students