Franklin West Supervisory Union

Aligning Staffing with Student Needs and Enrollment

APRIL 2015
The District Management Council’s mission is to achieve systemic improvement in public education.

DMC Mission

The District Management Council was founded in 2004 to help address the most pressing and important leadership and management challenges facing American educators.

DMC believes that strengthening the management capacity of schools is essential for raising student achievement, improving operational efficiency, and allocating resources more effectively.
Closing the Achievement Gap

Grades 3-8 Reading General Education vs. Special Education 2009-2013

- Achievement gap
- General education students
- Students with disabilities
Methodology

Who is the District Management Council (DMC) - The District Management Council was founded in 2004 to help address the most pressing and important leadership and management challenges facing American educators. DMC has worked in 38 States and has benchmarked data from 1/3 of the students enrolled in US public schools.

Why Do a Study? - The District Management Council (DMC) has been working with Franklin West Supervisory Union to better understand how staff serves struggling students and to fully understand the many demands on their time. The goal is to create a baseline and common knowledge of how struggling students are being served across the Supervisory Union.

Who was Interviewed? – 44 teachers, 9 administrators and 7 para educators participated in roundtable or individual interviews. In addition, 7 SLPs, 16 Special Educators and 54 para-educators participated in a week long time study.

Data Collection - DMC collected data on current practices in elementary schools for both classroom teachers and specials teachers. Using a list of teachers’ names, grade level taught, and the student enrollment by classroom, DMC calculated the total grade level enrollment, the number of classes per grade level, actual class size, and the current average class size for each grade.

Data Collection - Written questionnaires were distributed to school principals to gain a deeper understanding of current staffing patterns and staffing guidelines. Follow up phone interviews were made to some principals in order to clarify their answers.

Potential Opportunities and Financial Impact - DMC analyzed how staffing required at each school would change if these hypothetical class size guidelines were applied consistently across the Supervisory Union’s schools.
Collecting schedules and conducting focus groups with leadership and staff helped provide a deep understanding of current practices in supporting struggling students.

### Project Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>November - December</th>
<th>January - February</th>
<th>March - June</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Collect data</td>
<td>2 Understand context</td>
<td>3 Share weekly schedules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Student and staffing data</td>
<td>- Conduct focus groups with staff to understand current teaching and learning practices</td>
<td>- Staff share their typical weekly schedules through dmPlanning tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Analyze data</td>
<td>5 Identify and share opportunities</td>
<td>6 Advise</td>
</tr>
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<td>- dmPlanning technology tool to analyze trends</td>
<td>- Highlight areas of opportunity and guide a shared discussion</td>
<td>- DMC provide advice as needed</td>
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Key Opportunities

1. Consider what training and background knowledge is required to best support struggling readers, both with and without IEPs.

2. Consider expanding the reach of your most skilled special education teachers by setting clear guidelines for their time with students and targeted group size.

3. Consider revising and expanding coaching to improve core instruction.

4. Consider becoming more proactive in how practitioners use their time.

5. Consider the impact and benefit of multi-age classes.
DMC’s definition for “students who struggle” is intentionally broad.

A similar approach for all can be effective and cost-effective.

Note: Students with severe cognitive disabilities or virtually no fluency in English do have more specialized needs.
Six interconnected best practices can help struggling students achieve at high levels, at lower cost.

DMC Framework for Supporting Struggling Students

1. Rigorous general education curriculum
2. Coordinated and sustained focus on reading
3. Extra time to learn
4. Targeted interventions
5. Content strong teachers
6. Data to track progress and inform improvement

Higher achievement for struggling students
Special educators in both Supervisory Unions spend a majority of their time supporting students academically.

### Special Education Teacher Instructional Topic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Topic</th>
<th>% Time Spent</th>
<th>Academic Topic</th>
<th>% Time Spent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Academic Instruction</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total Academic Instruction</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Deep content knowledge by teachers helps students unlearn misconceptions and master needed skills.

Instructional Support for Struggling Students

**Generalist/Para Support**
- Review test questions and show correct answer
- Provide homework help
- Quiz in preparation for future tests

**Content Strong Support**
- Associate each incorrect answer with underlying concept
- Infer misunderstandings from incorrect answers
- Teach prior, fundamental skills
- Teach correct material using 2 or 3 different approaches
When comparing to like communities with a similar “all inclusion” model, there is a sizeable pool of funds available for repurposing.

Staff Levels Compared to Similar Districts with “All Inclusion” Model Per 1,000 Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Like Communities</th>
<th>FWSU</th>
<th>VT SU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special Education Paraprofessionals</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Potential Funds for Repurposing:

**FWSU:** Up to 30 FTE or $600,000*

*Note: Based on hypothetical average salary and benefits of $20,000 for non-certified staff.*
At the K-8 level, both Supervisory Unions invest heavily in staff with generalized or limited training for supporting struggling students with IEPs.

FTE Dedicated to the Academic Support of Struggling Students (K-8 Level)

VERMONT SU

- Paraprofessionals
  - 51.7 FTE special education
  - 29.6 FTE general education

- Special education teachers
  - 27.1 FTE

- Literacy specialists
  - 2.9 FTE

~4,103 students

Franklin West

- Special education paraprofessionals
  - 30.7 FTE

- Special education teachers
  - 8.9 FTE

- Literacy specialists
  - 2.2 FTE

~1,743 students

Note: FTE dedicated to academic support was calculated by multiplying K-8 FTE by percent of academic-related direct service time.
Consider shifting special education paraprofessional’s role from academics to supporting students’ health, safety, or behavior support needs.

Revised Role of a Special Education Paraprofessional

**Current Responsibilities**

- Supporting students with mild-moderate disabilities with academic IEP goals: reading, math, writing, etc
- Materials creation/lesson planning for daily instruction
- Small group or 1:1 instruction for students with special needs
- Behavior support
- Supporting students with severe needs
- Lunch duty, recess duty, bus duty

**New Responsibilities**

- Supporting students with mild-moderate disabilities with academic IEP goals: reading, math, writing, etc
- Materials creation/lesson planning for daily instruction
- Small group or 1:1 instruction for students with special needs
- Behavior support
- Supporting students with severe needs
- Lunch duty, recess duty, bus duty
Key Opportunities

1. Consider what training and background knowledge is required to best support struggling readers, both with and without IEPs.

2. Consider expanding the reach of your most skilled special education teachers by setting clear guidelines for their time with students and targeted group size.

3. Consider revising and expanding coaching to improve core instruction.

4. Consider becoming more proactive in how practitioners use their time.

5. Consider the impact and benefit of multi-age classes.
At the K-8 level, special education teachers reported a wide range of direct student support time.

**Special Education Teacher Time with Students**

**VERMONT SU**
- Average: 51.8%
- Increasing average direct service to 75%, could realize 20.0 FTE.

**Franklin West**
- Average: 42.6%
- Increasing average direct service to 75%, could realize 7.0 FTE or over $500,000 to reallocate to other priorities.
K-8 special education teachers spend a majority of their time supporting students in groups of 1-3 students.

**Special Education Teacher Group Size**

**VERMONT SU**

- 31% of teachers have 1 student
- 17% have 2 students
- 19% have 3 students
- Other group sizes have varying percentages:
  - 9%, 4%, 4%, 2%, 3%, 2%, 2%, 7%

**Franklin West**

- 59% of teachers have 1 student
- Other group sizes have varying percentages:
  - 17%, 12%, 4%, 8%

*Increasing average group size to 5, could realize 15.0 FTE*

*Increasing average group size to 5, could realize 8.0 FTE or over $600,000 to reallocate to other priorities.*
Key Opportunities

1. Consider what training and background knowledge is required to best support struggling readers, both with and without IEPs.

2. Consider expanding the reach of your most skilled special education teachers by setting clear guidelines for their time with students and targeted group size.

3. Consider revising and expanding coaching to improve core instruction.

4. Consider becoming more proactive in how practitioners use their time.

5. Consider the impact and benefit of multi-age classes.
Managing how literacy specialists or coordinators spend their time will help strengthen core instruction for both students with and without IEPs.

### Literacy Specialists & Coordinator Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>CSSU % Time Spent</th>
<th>FWSU % Time Spent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student instruction or support</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Direct Service</strong></td>
<td><strong>36%</strong></td>
<td><strong>36%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Support Activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration with colleagues</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson modeling/team teach</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching/staff development</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Teacher Support Activities</strong></td>
<td><strong>20%</strong></td>
<td><strong>29%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indirect Service Activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning/materials preparation</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend meeting (other than IEP/EST)</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraprofessional management/supervision</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Indirect Service</strong></td>
<td><strong>44%</strong></td>
<td><strong>35%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Coaching general education teachers on how best to support students with mild – moderate needs
- Managing paraprofessionals
- Providing reading intervention or remediation for struggling students
- Developing and monitoring reading initiatives
Key Opportunities

1. Consider what training and background knowledge is required to best support struggling readers, both with and without IEPs.

2. Consider expanding the reach of your most skilled special education teachers by setting clear guidelines for their time with students and targeted group size.

3. Consider revising and expanding coaching to improve core instruction.

4. Consider becoming more proactive in how practitioners use their time.

5. Consider the impact and benefit of multi-age classes.
Given the Vermont Act 156, Supervisory Unions can more proactively manage staffing levels and how staff use their time.

Formula for Calculating FTE

\[
\text{Student Services} \times \text{Group Size} \times \text{Direct Service} = \text{Required FTE}
\]

- Hours of service determined by IEPs
- Are students helped in groups of 1, 2, 5?
- Hours/week each teacher spends delivering services to students
Around 50% of speech and language pathologists’ time is spent working directly with students.

Speech and Language Pathologist Time with Students

**VERMONT SU**

- Average: 46.6%

**Franklin West**

- Average: 55.4%

Increasing average direct service to 70%, could realize 5.0 FTE.

Increasing average direct service to 70%, could realize 3.0 FTE or $86,000 to reallocate to other priorities.


www.dmcouncil.org
Speech and language pathologists spend over $\frac{3}{4}$ of their week providing individual services to students.

Speech and Language Pathologist Group Size

**VERMONT SU**

- 1 student: 77%
- 2 students: 13%
- 3 students: 5%
- 4 students: 2%
- 5 or more students: 3%

**Franklin West**

- 1 student: 76%
- 2 students: 20%
- 3 students: 3%
- 4 students: 1%
- 5 or more students: 0%

Increasing average group size to 3, could realize 7.0

Increasing average group size to 3, could realize 5.0 FTE or over $232,000 to reallocate to other priorities.

Compared to similar medium spending districts, both Supervisory Unions have over 2 times more speech and language pathologists.

Staff Levels Compared to Like Medium Spending Districts (Per 1,000 Students)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Category</th>
<th>Like Communities</th>
<th>FWSU</th>
<th>VT SU</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speech and Language Pathologists</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Potential Funds for Repurposing:

**FWSU:** Up to 5.0 FTE or $247,000
Key Opportunities

1. Consider what training and background knowledge is required to best support struggling readers, both with and without IEPs.

2. Consider expanding the reach of your most skilled special education teachers by setting clear guidelines for their time with students and targeted group size.

3. Consider revising and expanding coaching to improve core instruction.

4. Consider becoming more proactive in how practitioners use their time.

5. Consider the impact and benefit of multi-age classes.
Overall, K-8 schools in Franklin West are effectively managing staffing allocation to adhere to district-set class size policies.

### Current Elementary Average Class Sizes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Average Class Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Franklin West

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Average Class Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>19.8</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Current Georgia Elementary & Middle School

- K
- K
- K
- K
- 1
- 1
- 1

**TOTAL FTE: 9.0**

**Avg. Class Size:**

- K – 15.0
- Grade 1 – 13.8

### Projected Georgia Elementary & Middle School

- K
- 1
- 1
- 1
- 1

**TOTAL FTE: 7.0**

**Avg. Class Size:**

- K – 18.8
- Grade 1 – 18.3

2.0 FTE or $136,000 in resources freed up
Key Opportunities

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3. Consider revising and expanding coaching to improve core instruction.

4. Consider becoming more proactive in how practitioners use their time.

5. Consider the impact and benefit of multi-age classes.
Next Steps

• Review Data with Faculty and Staff
• Review SLP and Special Educators Group Size
• Review Behavioral Support and Infrastructures
• Review How Time is Currently Used
• Develop New Role for Para Educators
• Develop Capacity of Every Teacher to be Deeply Skilled in the Teaching of Reading
• Develop Multi Tiered System of Support (MTSS)
• Develop a Consistent Approach to Intervention
• Develop a Focus on Reading for Students k-8
The District Management Council

If you have any comments or questions about the contents of this document, please contact Nathan Levenson at The District Management Council:

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