TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS
Department of Special Education

Task Force Recommendations:
From Ideas to Practice
My Friend Marvin
Development of the Task Force

- In May 2018, the Board of Education passed a resolution directing DPS to develop a plan in support of improving outcomes for students in special education.
  - Summer of 2018: Special Education hosted multiple engagement sessions with educators, parents and specialized service providers.
  - August 2018: Special Education Task Force launched with this charge
    - Describe the current state of special education in DPS; and
    - Develop recommendations for Special Education improvements.

Composition and Process

- 31 stakeholders, including parents, school leaders, Specialized Service Providers, community advocates, teachers and district central staff.
- Seven sessions to define the scope, learn more about special education in DPS and develop recommendations.
- Designed to develop the vision for improvements; recommendations will be fleshed out by DPS staff to create actionable strategies.
- Task Force website

Focus of Today

- Update the board on the May 2018 Board Resolution “Reorganization Plan”
- The Board will provide feedback
Task Force Panel

● **Pam Bisceglia**, Executive Director of AdvocacyDenver and Parent
● **Tayo McGuirk**, Board Member of Rocky Mountain Dyslexia Association and Parent
● **Michelle Koyama**, Executive Principal
● **Tywanna Jones**, Parent and Educator
● **Abbe Montoya**, Social Worker
SPED Task Force 5 Recommendation Areas

Inclusion

- Resources
- Literacy
- Evaluation and Eligibility
- Staff Excellence

Special Education Task Force
Recommendation#1: Inclusionary Practices

To eradicate disparities through inclusive practices, we recommend that

▪ all DPS schools commit to an ongoing campaign highlighting the benefits of including students with disabilities in all school activities and

▪ commit to educational programming offered first in the general education setting with appropriate supplementary aids and services.
**Proposed Action Steps: Inclusionary Practices (Part A)**

- **Policy**: By Fall 2019, the Board will approve a policy demonstrating a strong commitment to inclusion.

- **Measurement**: By Fall 2019, Instructional Specialists will measure baseline functioning of inclusionary practices at each school using the Inclusive Practices Checklist.

- **Campaign**: By Winter 2019, the Special Education department will develop and implement an inclusionary practices campaign in partnership with Communications.

- **Professional Learning**: By Summer 2020, the Special Education department in collaboration with various departments will develop and present professional learning on quality inclusion for all leaders and educators.

- **Action Plans**: At the beginning of each year, the Special Education department will support schools in the development of action plans to increase inclusionary practices.
## Proposed Budget: Inclusionary Practices (Part A)

### Inclusionary Practices for All Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Item</th>
<th>SY 19-20</th>
<th>SY 20-21</th>
<th>SY 21-22</th>
<th>SY 22-23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
<td>No cost</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign</td>
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<td>NA</td>
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<td>NA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Examination</td>
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<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Learning</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>$23,990</td>
<td>$10,800</td>
<td>$10,800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Action Plans</td>
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<td>NA</td>
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<tr>
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<td>$17,500</td>
<td>$23,990</td>
<td>$10,800</td>
<td>$10,800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Proposed Action Steps: Inclusionary Practices (Part B)

Inclusionary Practices for Students with Significant Needs

**Moderate Needs**
By Fall 2022, the Special Education department will have shifted resources from centers for moderate needs to schools, so that students with moderate needs will be served in their schools of choice.

**Severe Needs**
By Fall 2019, the Special Education department will provide coaches to support quality programming and inclusive practices for centers who serve students with severe needs.

**Profound Needs**
By Fall 2022, the Special Education department will work with local agencies to provide instructional and specialized service programming on Denver Public Schools campuses to address the limited availability in private facilities for students with profound needs.
Proposed Budget: Inclusionary Practices (Part B)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Item</th>
<th>SY 19-20</th>
<th>SY 20-21</th>
<th>SY 21-22</th>
<th>SY 22-23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moderate Needs</td>
<td>$1,181,510</td>
<td>$1,181,510</td>
<td>$1,181,510</td>
<td>re-evaluate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Severe Needs</td>
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<td>$490,776</td>
<td>$490,776</td>
<td>$490,776</td>
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<td>TBD</td>
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<td>$1,672,286</td>
<td>$1,672,286</td>
<td>$1,672,286</td>
<td>$490,776</td>
</tr>
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</table>
An audit of students’ Individual Education Programs demonstrate thoughtful documentation that shows that students are served in their least restrictive environment.

There is an increase in the number of students receiving services in the general education setting based on the Individual Education Programs services grid.

A review of school programs indicate higher ratings towards inclusive practices based on the data collected from the program reviews using the Inclusive Practices Checklist by Villa and Thousand and SWIFT.
Recommendation #2: Evaluation and Eligibility

To eradicate disparities through inclusive practices, we recommend
- DPS ensure that all students will be evaluated in a comprehensive, culturally appropriate and bias-free manner.
### Evaluation and Eligibility (Part A)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-referral Guidelines</th>
<th>Professional Learning</th>
<th>Monitoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By Fall of 2019, the Special Education department in collaboration with Equity will develop pre-referral guidelines for Child Find agents, which includes general education teachers, to assist in the steps taken to make appropriate and bias-free referrals to special education.</td>
<td>By Fall of 2019, the Special Education department will develop professional learning opportunities for Child Find agents on the established pre-referral guidelines for students to prevent bias.</td>
<td>Twice a year, the Special Education department will monitor the types of referrals made, identifying any disproportionate anomalies and develop action plans to address as needed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Proposed Budget: Evaluation and Eligibility (Part A)

### Inclusionary Practices for All Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Item</th>
<th>SY 19-20</th>
<th>SY 20-21</th>
<th>SY 21-22</th>
<th>SY 22-23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-referral Guidelines</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Learning</td>
<td>TBD - one time costs</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
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</table>
## Proposed Action Steps: Evaluation and Eligibility (Part B)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bias-Free Disability Criteria</th>
<th>Professional Learning</th>
<th>Monitoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By Fall 2019, the Special Education department will develop criteria for determining pre-referral eligibility for students that accounts for factors of potential bias.</td>
<td>During the 2019-20 school year, the Special Education department will provide mandatory training to address bias in eligibility determination for the Special Education Evaluation teams working with the student.</td>
<td>Each December and May, the Special Education department will monitor disability identification rates of students based on race, ethnicity, gender, language, culture and socioeconomic status and develop actions plans to address issues as needed to ensure equity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Eligibility and Evaluation Criteria for Special Education Multidisciplinary Evaluation Teams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Item</th>
<th>SY 19-20</th>
<th>SY 20-21</th>
<th>SY 21-22</th>
<th>SY 22-23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bias Free Disability Criteria</td>
<td>No cost</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Evaluation and Eligibility**

- **Proposed Budget: Evaluation and Eligibility (Part B)**

- **GOAL #1** Great Schools in Every Neighborhood
Success Criteria: Evaluation and Eligibility

December count data will indicate proportionate identification of students needing special education services based on race, ethnicity, language, culture and gender.
Recommendation #3: Specially-Designed Instruction - Literacy

To eradicate disparities through inclusive practices, we recommend:

▪ Every DPS elementary school adopt a multisensory, sequential, scientifically-based, structured literacy methodology (MSL) in reading and writing; and
▪ Screen all students who enter DPS for predictors of future reading difficulties such as dyslexia.
Proposed Action Steps: Specially-Designed Instruction- Literacy (Part A)

**Development of Knowledge and Skills of MSL* for General Education**

**Screen**
By Spring 2020, the Special Education department, in collaboration with Curriculum and Instruction, will develop a process to screen for dyslexia, pilot the process, and then develop a plan to scale the process districtwide for the 2020-21 school year.

**Survey**
By Fall 2019, the Curriculum and Instruction department, in collaboration with Special Education, will survey all elementary schools to identify sites that currently instruct using MSL methods and learn how schools can best leverage these methods in their core and interventions.

**Cohort**
By Winter 2020, the Special Education department, in collaboration with Curriculum and Instruction, will complete a request for proposal of schools interested in a year one cohort that focuses on enhancing core explicit, systematic phonics instruction with MSL methodology.

**Professional Learning**
By Spring 2020, the Curriculum and Instruction and Special Education departments will complete an MSL training for the first year cohort that includes a combination of direct instruction and coaching.

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*Multisensory, sequential, scientifically-based, structured literacy methodology (MSL)*
## Proposed Budget: Literacy (Part A)

### Development of Knowledge and Skills of MSL for General Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Item</th>
<th>SY 19-20</th>
<th>SY 20-21</th>
<th>SY 21-22</th>
<th>SY 22-23</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Screen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort</td>
<td>No Cost</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Totals</td>
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<td>$119,296</td>
<td>$119,296</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Proposed Action Steps: Specially-designed Instruction- Literacy (Part B)

By Fall 2022, the Special Education department will have at least one advanced Multisensory Structured Language (MSL) credentialed special education instructional staff member in each school that has the competency to deliver advanced MSL methods for students with dyslexia or other language disorders who qualify under the criteria set in the Exceptional Children’s Education Act.

Each year, the Special Education department will provide coaching for special education instructional staff to master advanced MSL methods.
**Proposed Budget: Literacy (Part B)**

**Development of Knowledge and Skills of MSL for General Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Item</th>
<th>SY 19-20</th>
<th>SY 20-21</th>
<th>SY 21-22</th>
<th>SY 22-23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MSL Credentials</td>
<td>$84,600</td>
<td>$111,300</td>
<td>$111,300</td>
<td>$21,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
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<td>$81,796</td>
<td>$81,796</td>
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<td>$193,096</td>
<td>$193,096</td>
<td>$102,796</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Success Criteria: Specially-Designed Instruction- Literacy

● Program evaluations will indicate that all schools are implementing an explicit, systematic, standards-aligned foundational skills program in grades K-2 and have considered how multisensory structured language methodologies can enhance the outcomes of that program.

● Elementary primary general education (K-2) instructional staff will be provided training in MSL methods.

● A minimum of one special education instructional staff member in every school will be credentialed in advanced MSL methods.

● Accelerated performance in early literacy English and Spanish, as measured by READ Act assessments (K-3) and CMAS (grade 3).
Recommendation #4: Resources

To eradicate disparities through inclusive practices, we recommend:

- DPS provide funding to allow for appropriate staffing based on educator workload and professional development, for curriculum and materials, and for on-site health services.
Proposed Action Steps: Resources (Part A)

## Research and Application of Funding Options for Special Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Research and Analysis</th>
<th>Decision</th>
<th>Financial Transparency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By Summer 2019, the Special Education and Finance departments will compile data that may include student counts, disability types, mobility rates and service minutes.</td>
<td>By Fall 2019, the Special Education and Finance departments will have conducted research with similar districts to DPS on various funding and staffing models.</td>
<td>By Winter 2019, the Special Education and Finance departments will determine the funding formulas and timelines for subsequent budgets including central resources and school-based resources.</td>
<td>By Spring 2019, the Special Education and Finance departments will continue to review and improve processes around financial transparency; communication tools will be developed to better communicate how special education funding is allocated.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
## Proposed Action Steps: Resources (Part B)

### Instructional Resources for specially-designed Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Instructional Materials</th>
<th>Determine SDI Materials</th>
<th>Process to Fund</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By Fall 2019, the Special Education, Curriculum and Instruction and Finance departments will review the current process to ensure special education instructional staff have core instructional materials and make adjustments to that process as needed.</td>
<td>By Fall 2019, the Special Education department will determine the minimum instructional tools that special education instructional staff need to meet the specially-designed instruction requirements set forth in individual education programs.</td>
<td>By Spring 2020, the Special Education department, along with Curriculum and Instruction and Finance, will establish a process to ensure special education instructional staff have the necessary instructional resources to provide specially-designed instruction.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Success Criteria: Resources

- DPS will have completed the necessary research on funding models and implemented the chosen model.
- DPS will have an established and documented process to ensure all special education instructional staff have the necessary instructional tools.

Note: In the event that additional funds are required but not available, DPS will explore new funding sources.
Recommendation #5: Staff Excellence

To eradicate disparities through inclusive practices, we recommend

- DPS recruit, develop, and retain a high-quality, diverse staff.
Proposed Action Steps: Staff Excellence (Part A)

Professional Learning

Specially-Designed Instruction

Starting Summer 2019, the Special Education department (in collaboration with other departments) will develop and provide ongoing robust professional learning opportunities for school-based instructional teams, focused on specially-designed instruction.

School Leadership

Starting Summer 2019, the Special Education department (in collaboration with other departments) will develop and provide ongoing and differentiated professional learning opportunities for school-based leadership to better support the logistical, instructional, and legal components of special education in their buildings.
## Proposed Budget: Staff Excellence (Part A)

### Professional Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Item</th>
<th>SY 19-20</th>
<th>SY 20-21</th>
<th>SY 21-22</th>
<th>SY 22-23</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specially Designed Instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Leaders</td>
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</table>
## Proposed Action Steps: Staff Excellence (Part B)

### Retention and Recruitment of Diverse Special Education Instructional Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Research and Analysis</th>
<th>Decision</th>
<th>Evaluate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By Summer 2019, the Special Education and Human Resources departments will compile data that may include instructional staff retention rates, summary of exit interviews, etc.</td>
<td>By Winter 2020, the Special Education and Human Resources departments will have conducted research with similar districts to DPS on retention and recruitment strategies for Special Education instruction staff.</td>
<td>By Spring 2020, the Special Education and Human Resources departments will determine differentiated retention and recruitment strategies to address shortages across the various roles that work within special education.</td>
<td>Twice annually, the Special Education and the Human Resources departments will review the effectiveness of the retention and recruitment strategies and make adjustments as needed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Success Criteria: Staff Excellence

- Each teacher and specialized service provider has the necessary knowledge and skills to complete their job as determined by reduction in turnover rates and fewer students going to center programs.
- A series of specialists are supporting teachers, specialized service providers, and paraprofessionals with job embedded training.
- The shortage of instructional staff has been addressed using strategies developed from other districts.
## Additional Resources Needed

### Resources Needed Across All Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>SY 19-20</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Specialists*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>$81,796</td>
<td>$81,796</td>
<td>$81,796</td>
<td>$81,796</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Special Education Instructional Specialist are necessary to fulfill much of the work outlined in this proposal. Sped currently has 18 for a 1:500 special education student ratio. Metro average is 1:350.
GOAL #1: Great Schools in Every Neighborhood

Cross-Functional Collaboration and Accountability

- Annual report to the Board
- Annual State of Special Education shared with the Task Force
- Meet with Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) 2x per year to share progress and barriers
- Bi-weekly meetings with cross-departmental committee to plan and progress monitor

Next Steps
Question & Answer
Conclusion
My Friend Marvin

Special Education Task Force
TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS
Department of Special Education

Appendix and References
Glossary

- **Special Education Instructional Specialist (SEIS)** - Special Education support partner assigned to schools
- **Specialized Service Providers (SSPs)** - includes audiologists, occupational and physical therapists, counselors, nurses, orientation and mobility specialists, psychologists, social workers, speech language pathologists
- **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)** - the requirement in federal law that students with disabilities receive their education, to the maximum extent appropriate, with nondisabled peers and that special education students are not removed from regular classes unless, even with supplemental aids and services, education in regular classes cannot be achieved satisfactorily. [20 United States Code (U.S.C.) Sec. 1412(a)(5)(A); 34 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) Sec.300.114.]
- **Child Find Agent** - individuals who work for the school district, private schools and outside agencies who have a vested interest in finding students with a disability that the district is obligated to evaluate and offer a free and appropriate public education if found to be eligible for specially-designed instruction
- **Pre-referral** - to identify, develop, and implement alternative education strategies for students who have recognized problems in the classroom before the student is referred to special education
- **Exceptional Children’s Education Act** - state law that ratified the federal Individuals with a Disability Act
- **Multisensory Structured Literacy (MSL)** - A direct, explicit, systematic, sequential and multisensory approach to teaching literacy skills through a study of the language. The two examples are for Phonological Awareness and Alphabetic Principle.
- **Specially-designed instruction** - additional instructional methods needed for students with some disabilities. Some examples include advanced multisensory structured language, applied behavior analysis (used with students with autism), cognitive based intervention (used with students with emotional disabilities), sign language, braille, orientation and mobility for students who are blind, articulation (students with speech disorders), adaptive functioning (students with intellectual disabilities), etc.
- **Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)** - The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) says that each child who has a disability and needs special education and related services will receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE)
DPS Special Education First Steps Strategic Plan (2018). Retrieved from https://docs.google.com/document/d/14QDXVtQWnM337TTmg3jUAle391c-Y2qTJTv1ZyFBy8Y/edit?usp=sharing


DPS Special Education Data Package (2018) Retrieved from https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1kHuiHSROPuX6bFDS7O5EDtNOiTcMDDta5lzQMM0DxWg/edit?usp=sharing

DPS Special Education First Steps Strategic Plan (2018). Retrieved from https://docs.google.com/document/d/14QDXVtQWnM337TTmg3jUAle391c-Y2qTJTv1ZyFBy8Y/edit?usp=sharing
References


Pendleton, A., personal communication, January 2019


DPS Special Education First Steps Strategic Plan (2018). Retrieved from https://docs.google.com/document/d/14QDXVtQWnM337TTmg3jUAle391c-Y2qTJTv1ZyFBy8Y/edit?usp=sharing

Ferrandino, M., SPED Community Talk (studentequity.dpsk12.org)

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DPS Special Education First Steps Strategic Plan (2018). Retrieved from https://docs.google.com/document/d/14QDXVtQWnM337TTmg3jUAle391c-Y2qTJTv1ZyFBy8Y/edit?usp=sharing
Inclusive Practices: Background Information

Rationale

“Almost 30 years of research ... has demonstrated that the education of children with disabilities can be made more effective ... by ensuring their access to the general education curriculum in the regular classroom...” (IDEA 2004)

More time in general education results in less absences, fewer behavior referrals and greater post secondary options (Wagner, et al 2007)

“There is clear and consistent evidence that inclusive educational settings can confer substantial short- and long-term benefits for students with and without disabilities.” (Hehir, et al 2012)

60% of DPS parents of students with a disability want their child to spend more time in the general education classroom (SPED Engagement Feedback 2018)

Current Initiatives

2014-2017 DPS Special Education Department pilot study on inclusion through the ”Inclusive Practices” cohort demonstrated gains in academic achievement for students with a disability (DPS Inc. Prac. Rpt. 2017)

District 11 in Colorado Springs
- Removed all moderate and severe needs center programs in 1993; contracts with a BOCES for most severely impacted students
- Strong commitment to students receiving their services in the neighborhood schools
- No additional funding was provided
- Currently the most inclusive large urban school district in Colorado
- Asked the question, “what do we need to do to keep this student at the neighboring school?”
- Unique professional learning options
Evaluation and Eligibility: Background Information

Rationale

DPS identification rates for certain students with a disability based upon rate are disproportionate. For example, African American students are under-represented in Autism and Other Health Impaired and over-represented in Serious Emotional disability compared to their white and Hispanic counterparts. White students are over-represented for Autism but under-represented for Serious Emotional Disability. In addition, female students are under-represented in Special Education (DPS Data Package 2018)

22% of white students in special education performed at or above grade level, while African-American and Hispanic students performed at 2% at or above grade level. (DPS Data Package 2018)

Current Initiatives

The department of special education will explore the root causes of racial disproportionality in educational outcomes and identification rates of students of color with a disability compared to white students with a disability and implement actions plans to address the disproportionality. (DPS SPED First Steps 2018)

Special education received an ESSA (Every Child Succeeds Act) grant to investigate possible root causes of racial disproportionality and develop prototypes to address the disproportionality.
### Background Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability</th>
<th>National</th>
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<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>African American</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autism</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<td>6.7%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
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<td>Specific Learning Disability</td>
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<td>44%</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>51.8%</td>
<td>48.2%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>13.3%</td>
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<td>14.8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Health Impairment</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental Disability</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Disability</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious Emotional Disability</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Disability</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Incidence (hearing, vision and TBI, Deaf/Blind, OI)</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rationale

"To minimize reading failure, classroom reading approaches must include systematic, explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, letter-sound knowledge, spelling integrated with reading, fluency, vocabulary and text comprehension. If such programs are not sufficient for students with dyslexia, then students will need to have a Multisensory Structured Language education. (Birsh, 2005)

Only 7% of special education students in DPS achieve at or above expectations in English Language Arts (DPS Data 2018)

Black and Hispanic students in special education average 3% and 4% achievement at or above grade level respectively in English Language Arts (DPS Data 2018)

Current Initiatives

The special education department has a goal to address early literacy for students with a disability through Multisensory Structured Language methodology training. (First Steps 2018)

By 2020, 80% of DPS third-graders will be at or above grade level in reading and writing. DPS currently has an early literacy initiative in place. (DPS Early Literacy 2020 plan, 2016)

The Literacy Department has identified inconsistent literacy instruction, particularly in the areas of phonemic awareness and letter-sound instruction, and will be proposing potential solutions to address the inconsistencies. (Pendleton 2019)
The Impact that MSL has on learning to read and write

Fig. 1. Brain activation differences in dyslexia and its treatment [from (36)]. Functional magnetic resonance imaging activations shown on the left hemisphere for phonological processing in typically developing readers (left), age-matched dyslexic readers (middle), and the difference before and after remediation in the same dyslexic readers (right). Red circles identify the frontal region, and blue circles identify the temporo-parietal region of the brain. Both regions are hypoactivated in dyslexia and become more activated after remediation.
Examples of Multisensory Structured Language

### Phonological Awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Say</th>
<th>Now say it again, but don’t say /k/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Say <strong>coat</strong></td>
<td>(the k sound)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Say <strong>meat</strong></td>
<td>Now say it again, but don’t say /m/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(the m sound)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Say <strong>take</strong></td>
<td>Now say it again, but don’t say /t/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Say <strong>game</strong></td>
<td>Now say it again, but don’t say /m/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Say <strong>wrote</strong></td>
<td>Now say it again, but don’t say /t/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Say <strong>please</strong></td>
<td>Now say it again, but don’t say /z/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Say <strong>clap</strong></td>
<td>Now say it again, but don’t say /k/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Alphabetic Principle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>t</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>l</th>
<th>e</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Resources: Background Information

Rationale

There is a teacher and specialized service provider shortage in Special Education in Colorado. (TEACH 2019)

DPS uses a student-based budgeting strategy and school leaders develop budgets based on school needs. (DPS Budget, 2019)

Current allocations of funds starts with caseloads. Additional allocations are provided to school based on risk factors. For example, schools receive additional supplemental funding per student if the caseload is over the recommended ratio. (DPS Budget, 2019)

Instructional resources for special education comes from the school budgets. (DPS Budget, 2019)

Schools determine their specialized service provider (SSP) staffing. (DPS Budget, 2019)
Rationale

Colorado Department of Education does not require specialized training for autism, affective needs or intellectual disabilities. Turnover rates of new teachers, who are only required to have a generalist license, is very high.

SPED has decreased its professional learning budget substantially over the past four years. (Ferrandino 2018)

In 2018, Special Education did not provide any summer training outside new hire professional learning.

Special Education has not consistently engaged university partners in development of creative recruitment and training programs over the past three years.

Current Initiatives

First Steps Strategic Plan includes major goals on school leader professional development and overall professional development concentrating on the use of non-student contact days and job embedded professional development utilizing the special education instructional specialists. (First Steps 2018)