



S u p e r i n t e n d e n t M e m o r a n d u m

To: Mark McDermott, RTM Moderator
From: Michael Cummings
Date: April 11, 2022
Re: Part 2: Response to 4-7-2022 RTM Budget Questions

Follow-up Questions from RTM Member Kelly Scinto

April 11, 2022

I am not speaking out against the dyslexia academy as I think it is a fantastic program. How did you get to the number of only 7 kids?

In consultation with colleagues from Literacy How during initial program development work it was determined that due to the intensity of support required for students enrolled in the Early Literacy Academy at McKinley School that the initial program cohort would be for up to seven students. This allowed for a more manageable program roll out. The roll out of the Early Literacy Academy involved intensive literacy coaching from a literacy mentor from Literacy How one day per week with general and special education staff working with our students enrolled in this program along with completion of thirty hours of structured literacy intensive coursework in phonemic awareness and phonics, vocabulary, syntax, and comprehension. The same training will be implemented for the roll out of the second Early Literacy Academy classroom.

Is that the number of kids who get outplaced into a Southport School?

Currently there are sixteen students from Fairfield who are unilaterally placed at Southport School. Southport School is not a state-approved private special education program. Parents at times may unilaterally place their children at Southport School but the school district would not place students with disabilities in programs that are not approved through the Connecticut State Department of Education. If parents and school staff feel that a change in placement is necessary to provide a student with disabilities with an appropriate program, the PPT would recommend referral to an appropriate state-approved private special education program.

Would it be better in the long run to invest in teachers that have the proper level of OG training/certification?

Special education staff receive ongoing literacy training to meet identified student needs. The specific literacy needs of students will inform the specific training offered to staff to address students' needs. Some of these trainings may include among others Wilson Level 1 training, Orton-Gillingham training, and training in the various programs through Lindamood Bell for example.

One teacher in each elementary school? Or to pay for training of current special Ed teachers beyond that first level of OG certification?

Professional learning opportunities for special education teachers and staff is ongoing in response to student needs. The specific needs of each student will inform the specific training provided. Some examples of literacy training that may be provided to special education teachers depending on the needs of his/her students may include Wilson Level 1 training, Orton-Gillingham training, and training in the various programs through Lindamood Bell for example.

What is success rate in elementary school kids diagnosed w dyslexia getting to grade level plus metrics to determine success.

The success of students with disabilities who are eligible for special education under the Specific Learning Disability – Dyslexia category getting to grade level in reading depends on many individual factors including when the student was initially identified as dyslexic and programmed for, the severity of the student's disability and whether the student has additional disabling conditions. Some possible examples of additional disabling conditions may include attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, a psychiatric disorder or additional learning disabilities. Student progress is monitored through IEP goals and objectives, performance within the general education classroom and well as performance on district and statewide assessments.

How much per year does the district spend to teach kids w dyslexia?

It would take some time to provide in-district approximate costs of programming targeted strictly for Dyslexia. During the 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years, however, the Fairfield Public Schools spent nearly \$1.8 million dollars to address students' literacy needs in placements outside the public school system.

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