

Board of Education – Budget Workshop – March 4, 2026

POMPERAUG REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 15

The mission of Region 15, a collaborative community committed to excellence, is to educate every student to be productive, ethical, and engaged in a global society through proven and innovative learning experiences supported by its strong community whose decision-making is based on the best interest of all students.

Mission Statement, Adopted 9 December 2002; Updated 2009

Board of Education – Budget Workshop

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

6:30 P.M.

Pomperaug High School Media Center

PRESENT: Ms. Sharon Attick (absent) Mr. Tom Marks
Ms. Shannon Cavallo (arrive 6:42 p.m.) Mr. Jeff Olsen
Ms. Heather Dwyer Mrs. Heather Rodgers
Mr. John Jenusaitis Dr. Sally Romano
Ms. Marion Manzo, Chairperson Mr. Steve Suriani

PRESENT: Mr. Joshua Smith, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Carrie Chiappetta, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Joe Martino, Director of Finance
Mr. Michal Bernardi, Rochambeau Middle School Principal
Ms. Stephanie Furman, Pomperaug Elementary School Principal
Dr. Paul Jones, Pomperaug High School Principal
Ms. Jennifer Murphy, Memorial Middle School Principal
Ms. Heather Pellicone, Middlebury Elementary School Principal
Mr. Jon Romeo, Gainfield Elementary School Principal
Mr. Chris Wermuth, Longmeadow Elementary School Principal

Ms. Manzo called the March 4, 2026 Budget Workshop Meeting to order at 6:38 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Call to Order
Pledge of Allegiance

Dr. Chiappetta, Mr. Bernardi, Ms. Furman, Ms. Hayes, Dr. Jones, Ms. Murphy, Ms. Pellicone, Mr. Rapuano, Mr. Romeo, and Mr. Wermuth, highlighted key areas including professional learning, tutoring, and curriculum development, emphasizing the use of data to support student needs and instructions improvement. Collaboration between general and special education staff and the ongoing curriculum writing process were also discussed. The group answered questions from the board, covering a variety of topics including, but not limited to, measuring the effectiveness of instruction and how the district collects student data.

K-12 Curriculum & Instruction:
supporting the Proposed Budget
(Attachment 1)

Superintendent Smith commented that the Athletics budget is mostly unchanged. The athletics budget is flat compared to last year. The only increase is \$50,000 in the “fees and services – professional services” line. The \$50,000 is meant to offset (replace) revenue that currently comes from gate fees. Superintendent Smith commented that at the March 18th workshop meeting we will discuss athletics fees again. We are collecting the data from last year’s fee conversations.

Trista DiDonato, a Southbury parent with three children involved in sports at high school, commented about the problem with gate fees at sporting events. Parents are willing to pay to support sports, but they would prefer pay-to-play fees instead of gate fees, because gate fees create inconvenience and an unwelcoming experience.

Ms. Manzo announced future meeting dates:

- a. Thursday, March 5, 2026 Special Meeting of the Board of Education & Boards of Finance from Middlebury and Southbury, GES (tour) 6:00 p.m.
- b. Monday, March 9, 2026 Policy and Curriculum Meeting, Pomperaug High School Media Center, 6:00 p.m.
- c. Monday, March 9, 2026 Regular Meeting of the Board of Education, Pomperaug High School Media Center, 7:30 p.m. (Bond Presentation)
- d. Wednesday, March 18, 2026 Budget Workshop, Pomperaug High School Media Center, 6:30 p.m. (Pupil Services, Student Fees, Capital Plan)
- e. Monday, March 23, 2026 Finance and Facilities Committee Meeting, Pomperaug High School Media Center, 6:30 p.m.
- f. Monday, March 23, Regular Meeting of the Board of Education, Pomperaug High School Media Center, 7:30 p.m.
- g. Wednesday, March 25, 2026 Budget Workshop with Boards of Finance from Middlebury and Southbury, 6:30 p.m.
- h. Wednesday, March 25, 2026, Public Hearing for the 2026-2027 Region 15 Proposed Superintendent’s Budget
- i. Monday, April 6, 2026 Policy & Curriculum Committee Meeting, Pomperaug High School Media Center, 6:00 p.m.

Comments from Citizens

Announcement of Future Meetings

Board of Education – Budget Workshop – March 4, 2026

- j. Monday, April 6, 2026 Regular Meeting of the Board of Education, Pomperaug High School Media Center, 7:30 p.m. (Adopt Budget)

Upon a motion by Mrs. Rodgers, seconded Ms. Cavallo
IT WAS VOTED

“to adjourn the March 4, 2026 Budget Workshop meeting at 9:20 p.m.” and passed with Ms. Cavallo, Ms. Dwyer, Mr. Jenusaitis, Ms. Manzo, Mr. Marks, Mr. Olsen, Mrs. Rodgers, Dr. Romano and Mr. Suriani voting “aye”. Ms. Attick was absent.

Adjourn



K-12 Curriculum & Instruction: Supporting the Proposed Budget

Elementary, Middle School, High School
Principals, Special Education
Administrators, & Assistant Superintendent

March 4, 2026

Budget Workshop

R15 Mission Statement

The mission of Region 15, a collaborative community committed to excellence, is to educate every student to be productive, ethical, and engaged in a global society through proven and innovative learning experiences supported by its strong community whose decision-making is based on the best interest of all students.



Empowered Learner

Learners prepare learning with curiosity and purpose, embracing challenges through adaptability and resilience, using varied resources and strategies to grow with a continuous commitment to discovery.

- ✔ Curious
- ✔ Self-directed
- ✔ Adaptable
- ✔ Reflective
- ✔ Persistent
- ✔ Growth-minded
- ✔ Goal-oriented
- ✔ Open-minded
- ✔ Confident



Innovative Problem-Solver

Apples critical thinking and creative approaches to address challenges, using varied tools, appropriate technologies, and reflection to generate effective solutions that create meaningful impact.

- ✔ Creative
- ✔ Analytical
- ✔ Strategic
- ✔ Design-minded
- ✔ Solution-focused
- ✔ Reflective
- ✔ Imaginative
- ✔ Innovative
- ✔ Collaborative



Ethical Contributor

Engages thoughtfully across cultures and perspectives, acting with integrity to strengthen communities. Demonstrates self-ownership, empathy, and respect for human diversity while actively working to create positive change locally and globally.

- ✔ Globally-minded
- ✔ Bridge-builder
- ✔ Culturally-competent
- ✔ Community-minded
- ✔ Service-oriented
- ✔ Intuitive
- ✔ Responsible
- ✔ Empathetic
- ✔ Courageous



Productive Collaborator

Builds trust through effective teamwork across physical and digital space, embracing multiple perspectives to achieve shared goals through mutual support and collective commitment to success.

- ✔ Team-oriented
- ✔ Dependable
- ✔ Open-minded
- ✔ Accountable
- ✔ Supportive
- ✔ Empathetic
- ✔ Trustworthy



Effective Communicator

Expresses ideas with clarity and confidence across audiences and platforms, demonstrating active listening and empathy in meaningful dialogue to drive collective understanding.

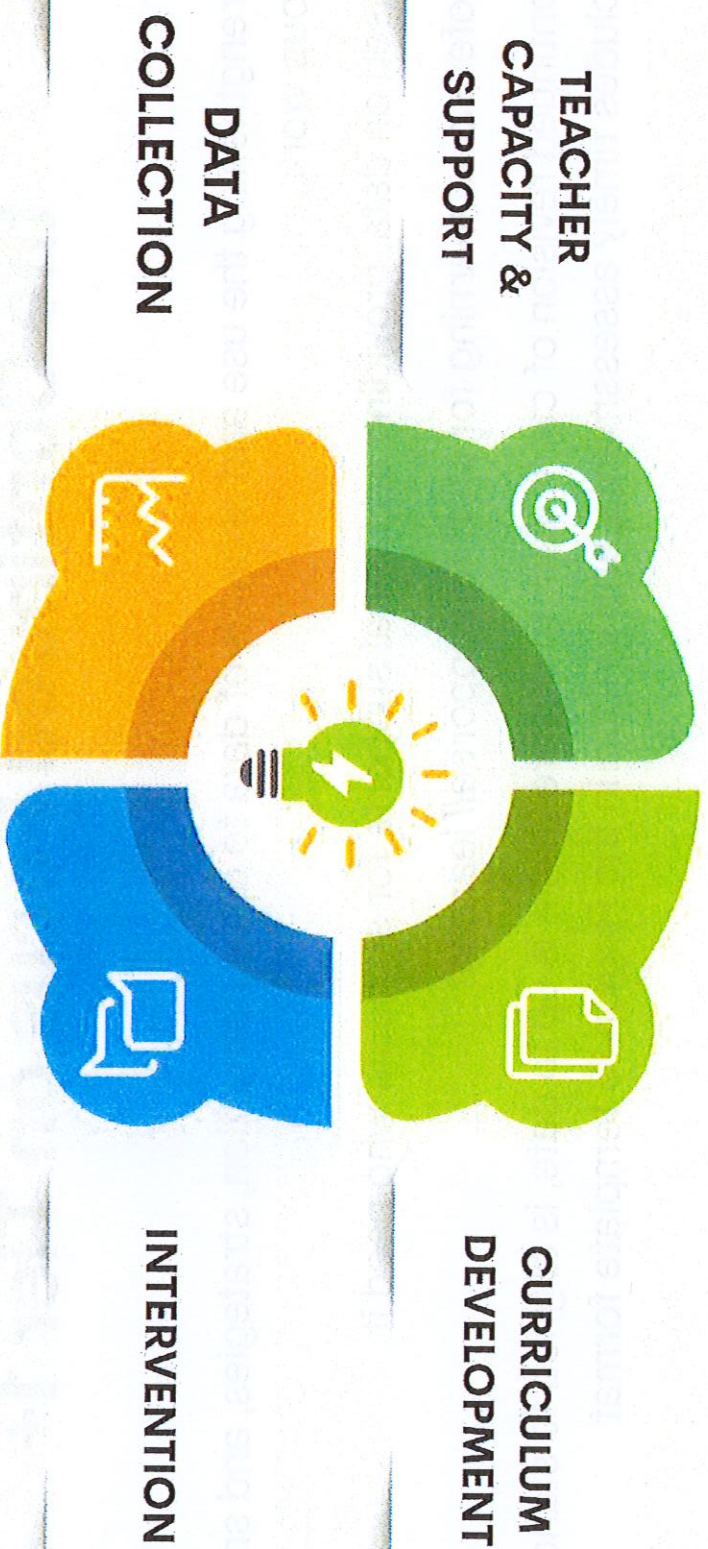
- ✔ Clear
- ✔ Persuasive
- ✔ Adaptable
- ✔ Imaginative
- ✔ Responsive
- ✔ Assertive
- ✔ Discerning
- ✔ Creative
- ✔ Expressive



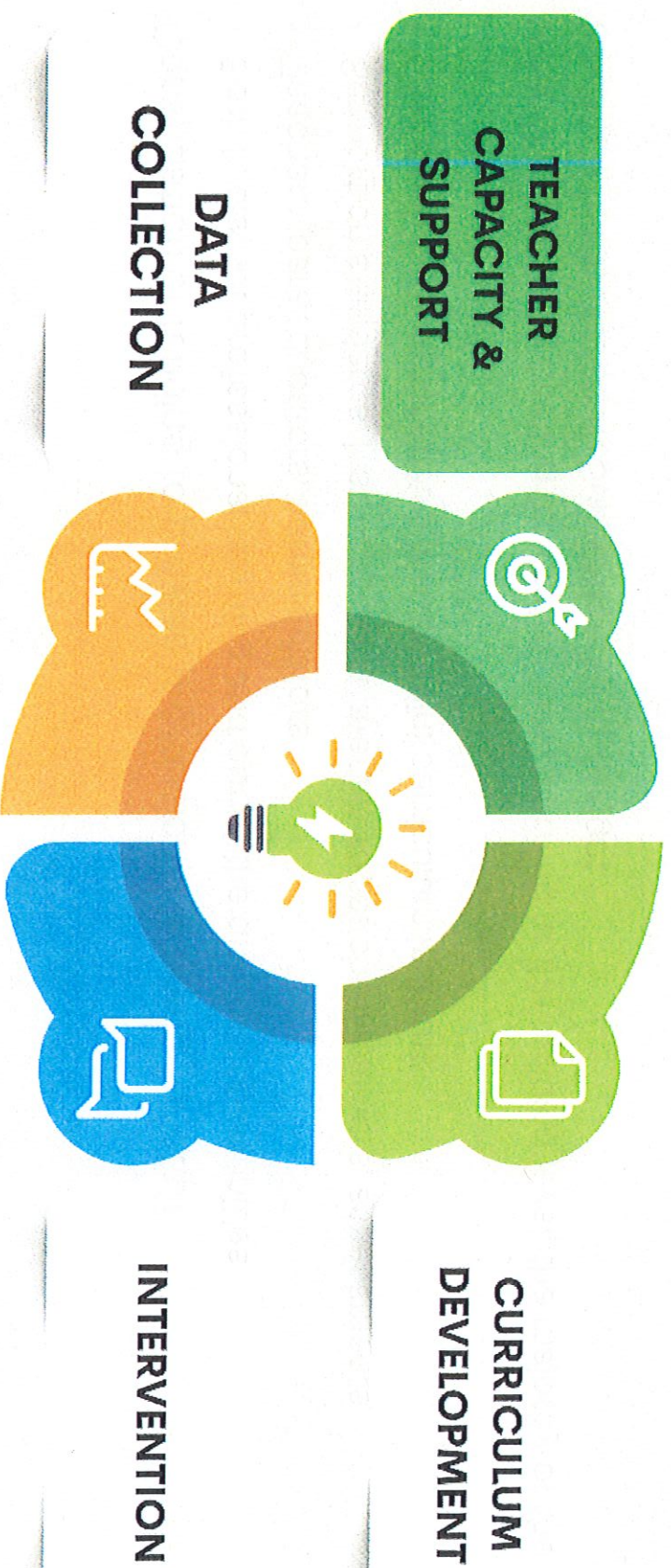
The Proposed Budget Supports the Continued Focus on Tier 1+

- Strengthening the use and analysis of data to drive instruction, strategies, and small group work
- Based on data, providing additional supports for students who need it
- Professional learning for staff to support *all* learners
- Continued revision of curriculum to ensure that it is up to date, is aligned to standards, includes timely assessments, and written in the Region 15 template format

SUPPORTING BEST PRACTICES



SUPPORTING BEST PRACTICES



Professional Learning (In Service)

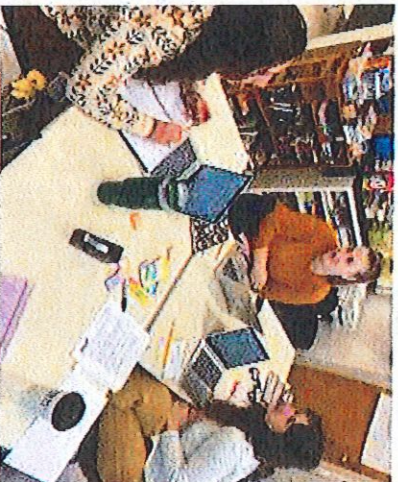


- Continuation of funding to provide professional learning for staff
- Both in district professional learning and out of the district opportunities
- Teachers, paraeducators, administrators
- Support on standards, instructional strategies to reach all learners, assessments
- Continuation of summer K-8 literacy mini curriculum institute

While there is some funding for professional learning at the building level, the majority of the funding is in the Assistant Superintendent's budget.

This line has not increase from last year's budget.

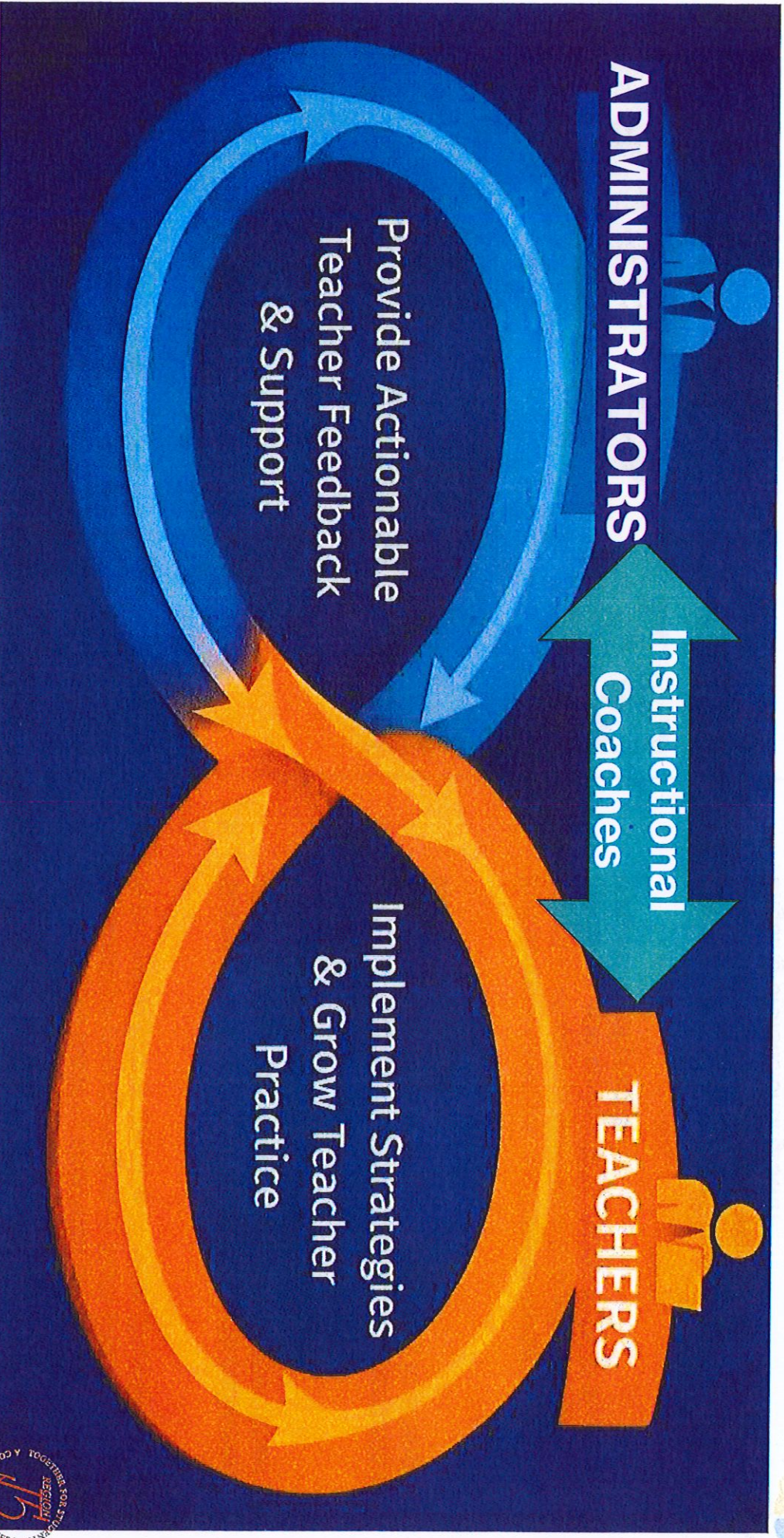
Focus on High Quality Instruction:



Ongoing Work:



- Professional learning continues on *Building Thinking Classrooms* methodologies in Math and opportunities to promote vertical learning in other discipline areas.
- Science and Social Studies continue to implement inquiry and close reading strategies to strengthen student literacy skills and comprehension.
- ELA continues to focus on building assessments and providing feedback during conferencing to strengthen student literacy skills
- Instructional Coaches continue to model research based instructional strategies through lab sites, peer modeling, and co-teaching cycles to build a community of practice
- Administrator commitment to providing clear, actionable feedback to support teachers and their ongoing professional growth



Examples of Professional Learning



Wrap Meetings

- Ongoing, job-embedded learning during wrap time to support teacher learning and student success through whole-staff, grade-level, or grand-band sessions.

Purposeful Planning

- Scheduled release time for teachers to meet with coaches, administrators, and support staff to plan for instruction based on student data and needs.

Coaching

- Instructional coaches partner closely with educators to analyze data, design units, and maximize instructional impact. Coaches improve practice in real time. The shared goal is refining teacher practice to ensure measurable increases in student success and outcomes.

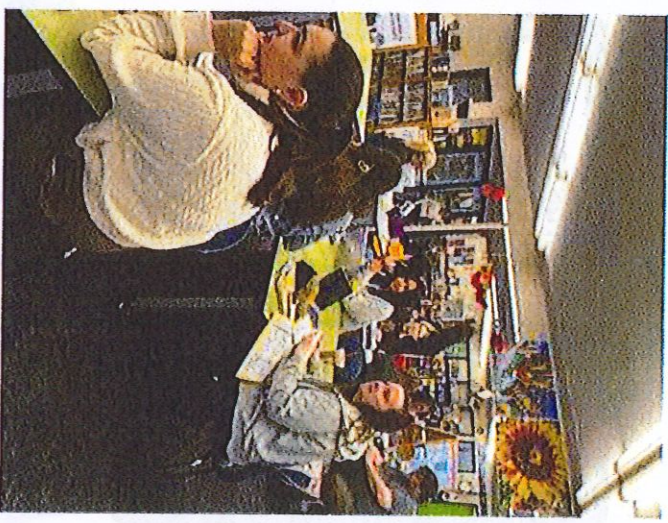
Building Based PD

- Building-based professional development acts as a bridge that connects district goals to the specific needs of the school. It ensures that every learning session is a direct path toward better student outcomes.

Why It Matters

By providing scheduled release time and dedicated coaching partnerships, the district creates a bridge between high-level goals and classroom reality, ensuring that data-driven planning and real-time support translate directly into refined teacher practice and improved student outcomes.

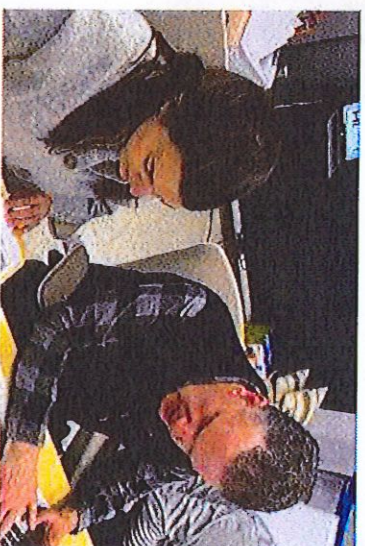
Wrap Time in Action



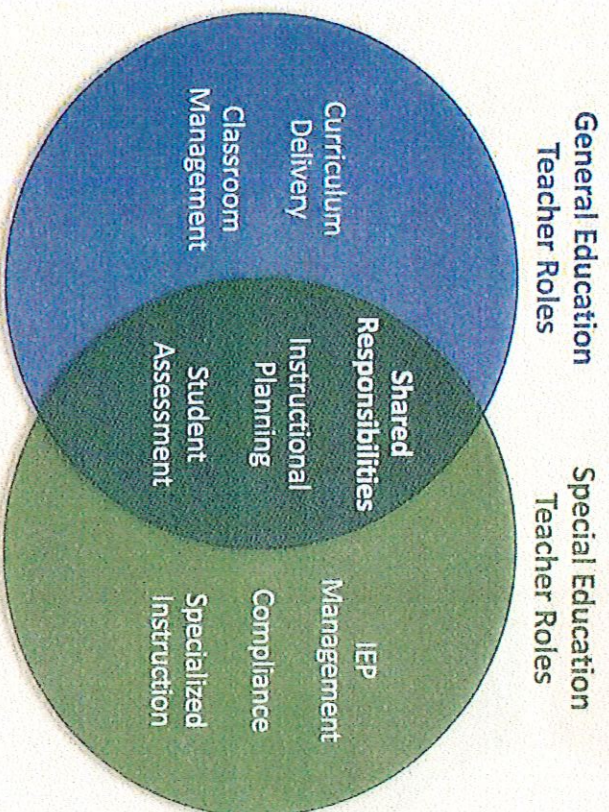
Coaching in Action



Purposful Planning in Action



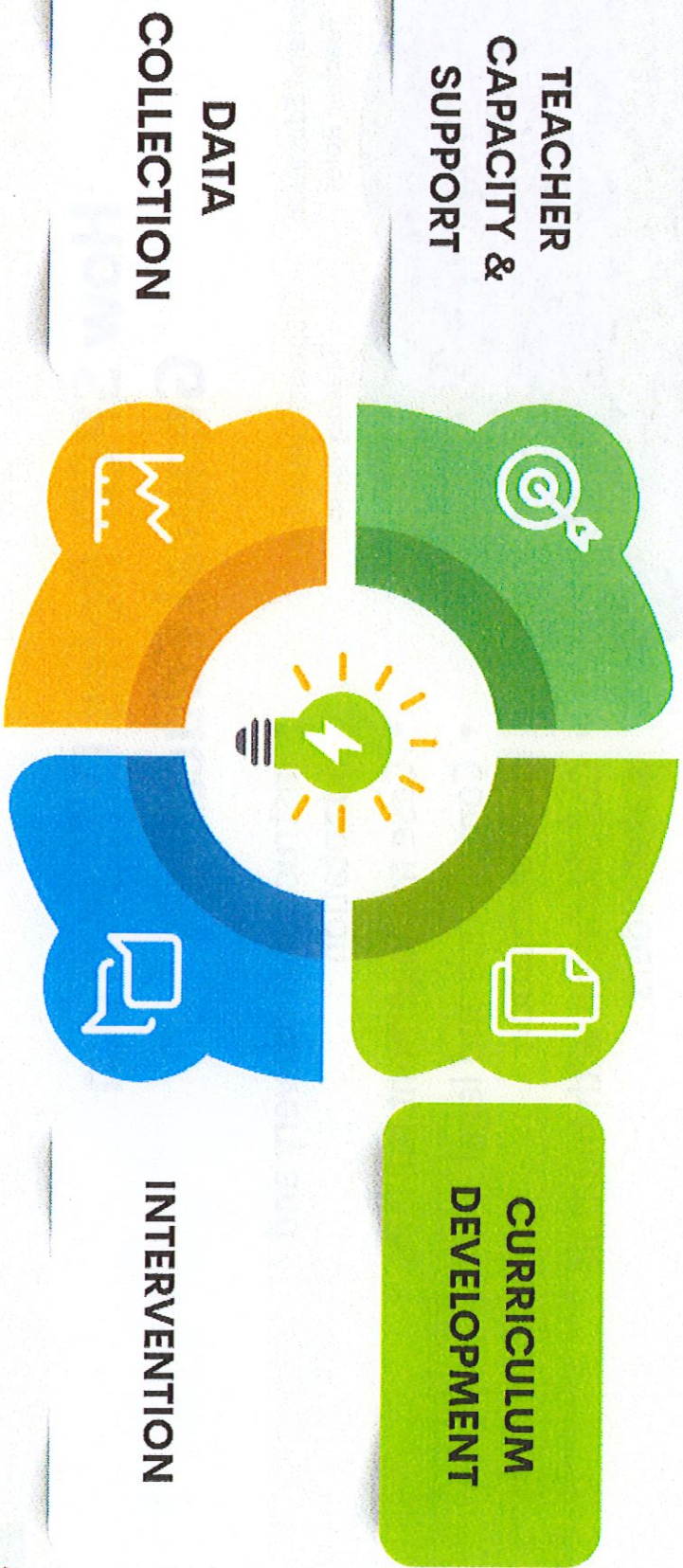
How SPED Roles Differ from General Education



- Instructional delivery and adaptation
- Case management for IEPs
- Compliance and legal documentation
- Collaboration with multiple stakeholders
- Behavioral and social-emotional support
- Progress monitoring and data analysis



SUPPORTING BEST PRACTICES



Summer 2026 Curriculum Writing

Part of R15 Ongoing Curriculum Cycle



This budget line is relatively flat when comparing last year's budget to this proposed budget

Elementary PE	HS PE	MS Social Studies
HS Ceramics	HS Personal Finance	MS ELA
HS Essentials	HS Science	MS Health/PE
HS Culinary	HS Social Studies	MS Math
HS English	HS Video	MS Music (Orchestra)
HS Yearbook	MS Science	World Language

Focus on Curriculum and Assessment:



Ongoing Work:



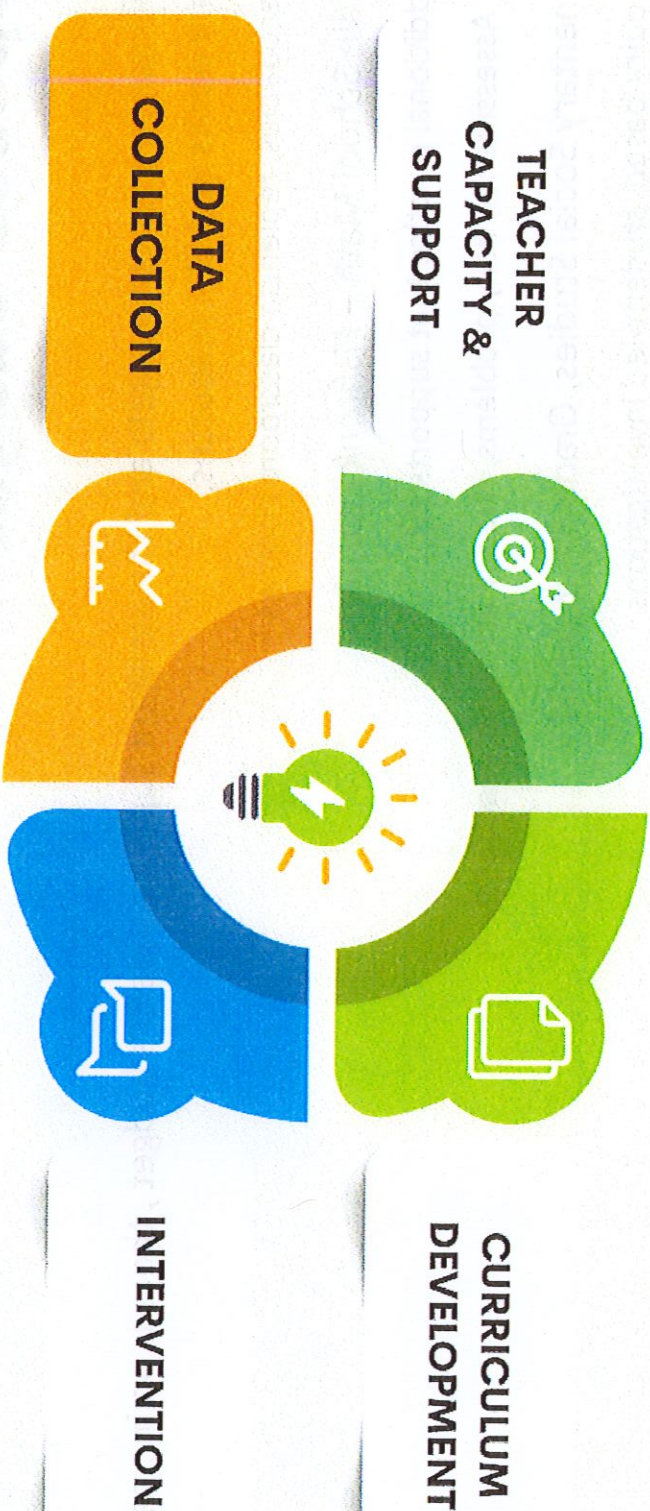
- Alignment of our curriculum documents and assessments to State Standards. Literacy Institute during Summer of 2026 to further refine practice.
- Development of curriculum pacing guides to enhance fidelity in delivery of curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- Developing unit, mid-unit, and formative assessments that are aligned to Standards to plan targeted instruction and Tier 1+ interventions. Planning for reassessment to gauge progress on meeting Standards
- Regular Data Teams and SRBI Meetings with Grade Level Teams with a focus on Tier 1+ supports and protocols to support student learning



Examples of Curriculum Resources in Proposed Budget

- In elementary school budgets and the assistant superintendent's budget, there is an increase in library books and ELA resources.
- Decodables, replenish classroom libraries
- Middle School Math – *Fishtank Learning*
- Additional practice that supports IM
 - Assessments, daily problems, fluency activities, teacher tools
- Elementary Social Studies, Grade 5 – *inquired*
- Inquiry-based, student-led investigations
- Chosen by teachers
- Second year in use in Grade 5
- Eventual plan to roll out into other elementary grades

SUPPORTING BEST PRACTICES





Software Licenses Related to Curriculum & Instruction: Include Assessments, Assessments Subscriptions

(In Assistant Superintendent's Budget)

The line in the proposed budget has increased from last year

- Data Warehouse – *EduClimber*
 - Working this year to building the platform
 - Currently in the system: state assessment data, attendance, report card grades, IABs, Running Records, Elementary Math End of Unit Assessments
 - Working on: Intervention data, ML student plans, MS data, setting threshold to automatically alert educators when students are “at risk”, PSAT data
 - Next Step: HS data
 - Integral part of data meetings at district and school levels
 - “naming names” and planning of strategies and small group work

Assessments



- K-3 State Reading Assessment – *EasyCBM*
- Web-based assessment on curriculum-based measures in reading
 - early literacy, phoneme segmenting, letter sounds, word/passage fluency, comprehension
- Given 3x a year based on state windows
- Has progress monitoring built in
- Will take the place of NWEA Fluency
 - funds reallocated from NWEA Fluency to EasyCBM and Project Read
- R15 is mandated to provide data to state

Grade K Reading Risk Analysis

Risk Level	Fall	Winter	Change
Low	88%	90%	2%↑
Some	8%	10%	2%↑
High	4%	0%	4%↓
Totals	100%	100%	-

Assessments (continued)

- *Project Read (UFL)*
- Provides instructional recommendations based on weekly UFLI progress monitoring
- Provides student names and focus for small group work
- Teachers can drill down to the granular level (grapheme-phoneme level) for each student

Students		Click on each student to see more	
Name	All Words	Words with concept error	
	92%	spoil wore scream pretty fixed gate mixed mom singing blade -	17 words
	66%	crowd February heart there waiting bread mow wednesday classroom football -	56 words
	92%	minute wednesday which mother cannot friend any many tall class -	18 words
	54%	crowd did down February heart hope point small soil spoil -	107 words
	100%		0 words
	88%	down heart there waiting minute wednesday fruit wore daylight scream -	28 words
	80%	February milk caught fault hour lawn minute mow saw wednesday -	41 words
	51%	crowd heart hope is out point soil south spoil there -	111 words
	60%	crowd down eye February heart out point soil south spoil -	97 words
	83%	crowd caught does fresh lawn minute mow watch wednesday again -	35 words
	80%	crowd heart milk out point south clue fruit suite textbook -	47 words
	62%	February heart milk out south spoil waiting bread caught does -	77 words



Assessments (continued)

- *NWEA MAP Growth*
 - Discontinue *NWEA Fluency* and replace with EasyCBM
- *PSAT*
 - Grades 9-11, Fall
- World Language Assessments
 - AAPPL (*ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages*)
 - Measures reading, writing, speaking, listening
 - Use for the Seal of Biliteracy at HS level
 - Used in HS & HS
- *Speakable* (HS)
 - Speaking and writing practice
 - Provides actionable data for teachers
 - individual or class-wide reports
 - To help adjust instruction



Data Teams



- **Perspective:** Engaging a diverse group of stakeholders, including coaches, teachers, specialists, and administrators, to provide a holistic view of student needs.
- **Pacing:** Maintaining a consistent meeting schedule to ensure that every student is monitored closely and that no child falls through the cracks.
- **Precision:** Utilizing specific, high quality data points to accurately measure student growth and determine the effectiveness of current strategies.
- **Purpose:** Driving action oriented conversations that result in tangible next steps for classroom instruction and ongoing progress monitoring.

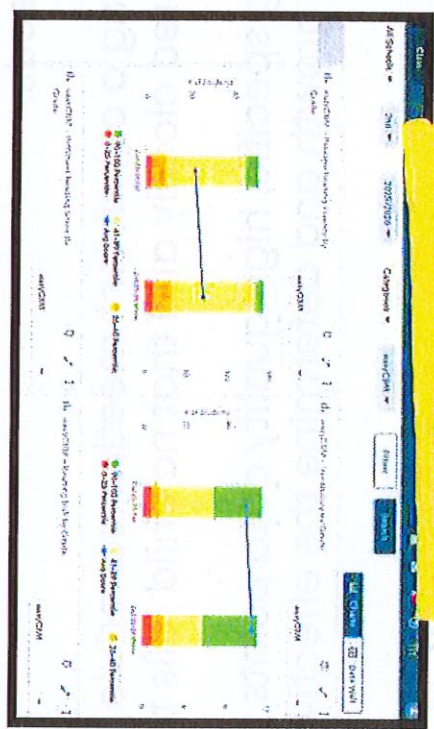


Data Teams in Action

Pacing

		Presidents Day/Wed - No Meeting
Feb 16	2/16	
Feb 23	2/23	Data Meeting Grade Four
Mar 2	3/2	Data Meeting Grade Three
Mar 9	3/9	Data Meeting Grade Two
Mar 16	3/16	Data Meeting Grade One
Mar 23	3/23	Data Meeting Kindergarten
Mar 30	3/30	Data Meeting Grade Five
Apr 6	4/6	Data Meeting Grade Four
Apr 13	4/13	Spring Break No Meeting
Apr 20	4/20	Data Meeting Grade Three
April 27	4/27	Data Meeting Grade Two

Precision



Purpose

Next Steps: Decoding & Comprehension

Decoding Strategies

- Sound out letter-by-letter
- Look for digraphs/blends (sh, ck, th, bl, etc)
- Break into syllables
- Find the words in the word
- Practice sight words

Comprehension Boosters

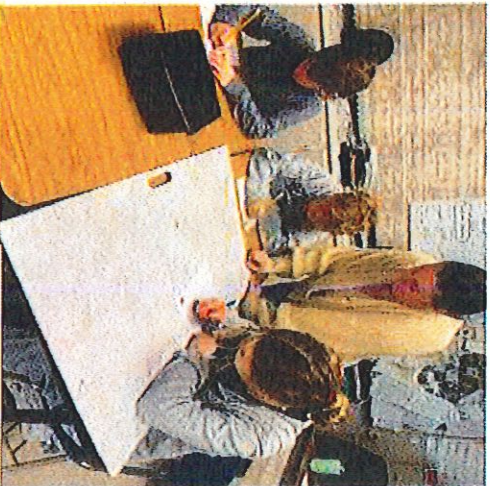
- Make predictions
- Ask questions (who, what, where, why, how)
- Visualize
- Summarize (what's the story about?)
- Retell the story
- (beginning, middle, end)

Read Aloud TOGETHER!

Perspective



Focus on Improving Student Performance:



Ongoing Work:



- Regular Data Team/SRBI Meetings with Grade Levels that include analysis of student work
- Use of formative assessments to measure student mastery of specific Standards
- Integrating authentic assessments to provide students with frequent application of content and skills
- Regular review of student attendance, discipline, NWEA, and state assessment data to better understand the needs of the whole child
- Use of EduClimber to identify student performance trends and engage in intervention practices as necessary

DATA DIVE Dialogue

I've been trying (insert strategy).

I'm looking for ideas for what I
can try next to support (skill).

What do es student(s) understand/
show they can do with (skill/concept).

What am I committing to try by
next Monday?



Data Analysis to Strengthen Inclusive Practices in Special Education...



This proposed budget supports the ability to:

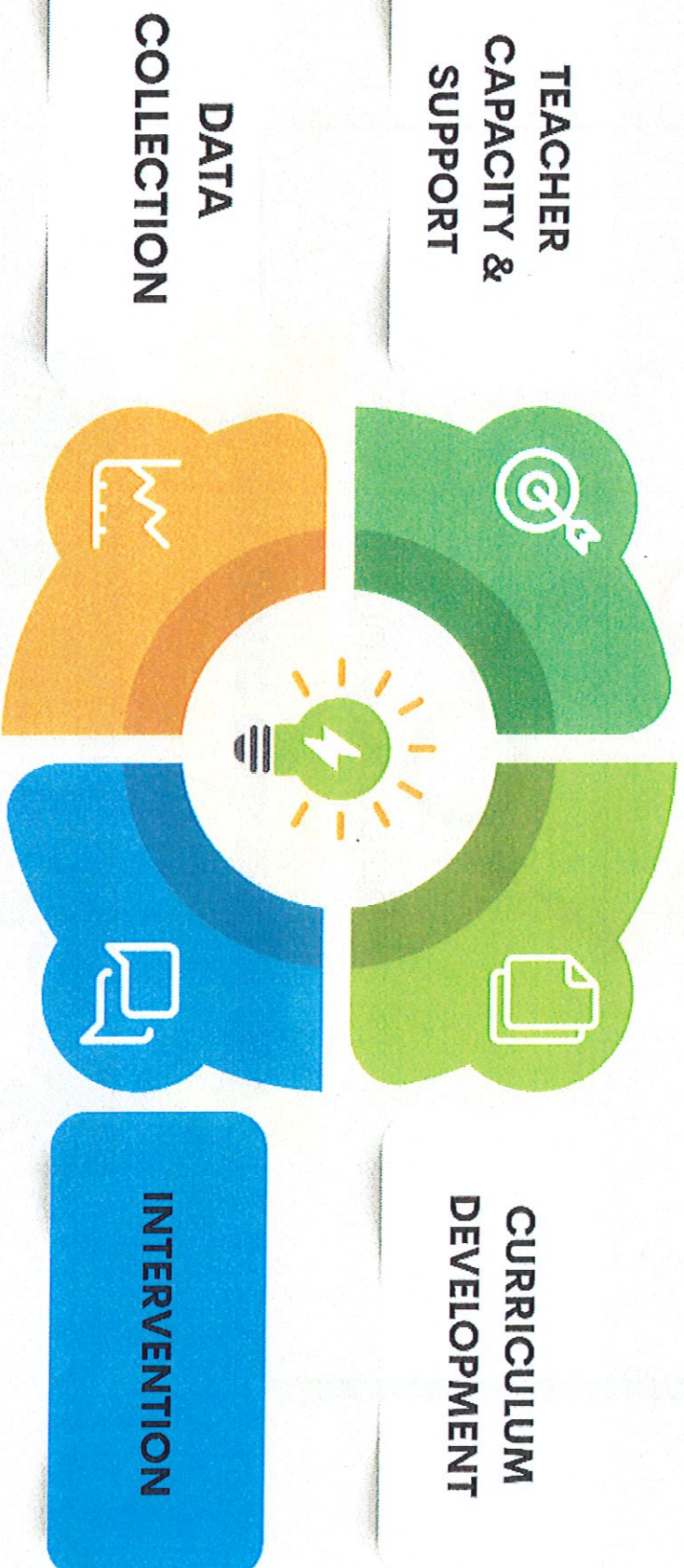
- More in depth achievement data review using EduClimber
- Tier 1+ alignment with special education and general education teachers with a focus on inclusive practices
- Special education teachers continuing their work with coaches for reading, writing and math instruction with the latter being a focus this year, especially as UFLI and IM become more familiar with all staff (UFLI & IM - in second year of full implementation)
- Alignment of standards, curricular concepts and vocabulary, and instructional language with the scope and sequence of small group math and IM
- Special education teachers receiving additional IM training and determining what resources are available in the program to support diverse learning styles



Data Analysis to Strengthen Inclusive Practices in Special Education... (continued)

- Special education teachers attending purposeful planning, PLC, and grade level meetings to support time with non-disabled peers and access to the Region's rich curriculum
- Continuation of PHS summer curriculum writing for Essentials classes by multidisciplinary teams (special education and general education staff)
- Refine data driven decision making for small group instruction
- Continued work of small group instruction in the resource room to provide opportunities for access to grade level concepts and tasks
- Incorporation of state assessment style questions and vocabulary within specially designed instruction.

SUPPORTING BEST PRACTICES

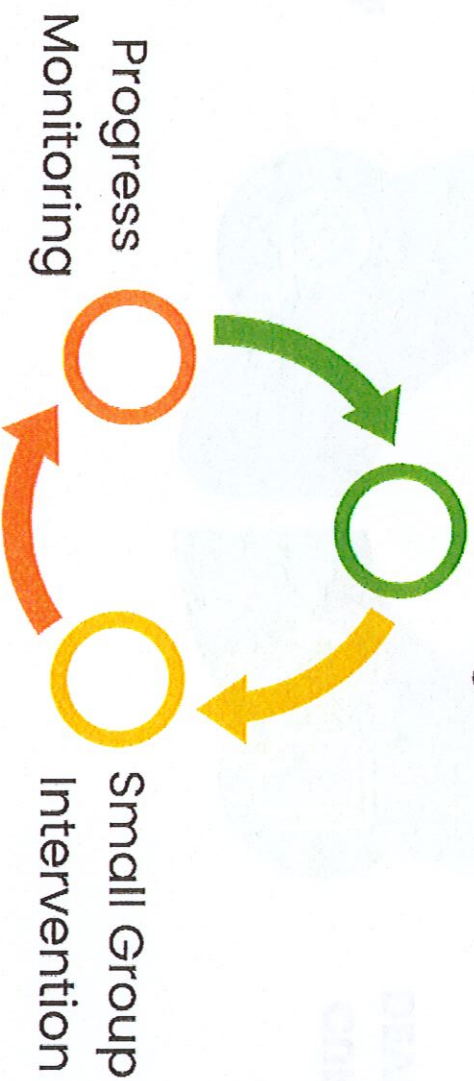


W.I.N. Block



Everyone can succeed!

Data Planning



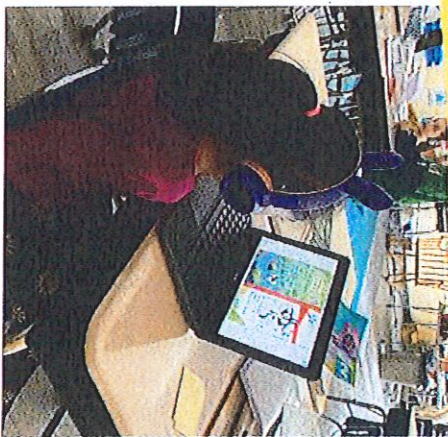


W.J.N. In Action

Small Groups



Reinforcement





Example of WIN Resource for Elementary Math

- Elementary Math - *Happy Numbers*
- Research-based online, individualized math support
- Used during elementary WIN time for additional math practice to deepen conceptual understanding, practice fluency
- Have been using it for a few years and pricing now has increased
- Funding included in the Assistant Superintendent's budget under "software licenses"





Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) Definition

The Official Definition (IDEA 34 CFR §300.39(b)(3))

According to the law, **Specially Designed Instruction** is adapting the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to address a child's unique needs resulting from their disability and to ensure access to the general curriculum.

- So that the child can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children.
- No one methodology works for students within and across disability categories.
- Methodologies vary based on target skill, age of student, and impact of the disability.
- Methodology adaptations should only be documented if student data indicate the student needs a specific methodology. (PROGRESS Center at the American Institutes for Research®)

Determining SDI



Instructional decisions are based on:

- Standardized evaluations
- District assessments (e.g., NWEA/MAPS, EasyCBM, PSAT)
- Classroom performance data
- Progress monitoring
- Individualized IEP goals and objectives

Instructional Models in Special Education



General Education Access

- As is in the general education setting
- With accommodations (The HOW)
- With modifications (The WHAT)
- Adult Supported Classes
 - Teacher Supported- We have been working to improve our teacher supported classes through professional development in team teaching
 - Paraeducator Supported- We have implemented a data collection system that requires paraeducators to record student support data. This process is anchored by ongoing case manager/staff training and collaborative reviews, ensuring that data directly informs our instructional and placement decisions.

Staffing Shortages BSE 9/2025:

The Bureau of Special Education (BSE) is aware that many public school districts and private special education programs are facing challenges with hiring and retaining highly qualified staff. Despite the tremendous amount of work being done by administrators, teachers, related service personnel, and paraeducators to implement individualized education program (IEP) services, there may still be instances when IEP supports and services cannot be fully delivered due to staffing vacancies.

[BSE 9/5/2025 Letter](#)

Instructional Models in Special Education



This proposed budget supports the ability to continue to provide Highly Specialized Instruction (Taught by a Special Education Teacher)

- Essentials/Small Group Instruction Classes
 - Through summer curriculum work, the department has been moving toward alignment of essentials courses with the corresponding general education course to allow students to access the curricular materials while still getting instruction tailored to their goals and objectives. This alignment is important for students returning to general education and assures exposure to the same materials and standards that their peers have, which improves preparedness for SBA/SAT
 - Multisensory Instructional Approach - Programs and approaches but not limited to Wilson, Orton-Gillingham, Language Live, Transmath, etc.
- Collaborative Learning Programs, Flex Room and Learning Center Programs
 - Allow for more customization and goals-based approach to education and student needs
 - Enhanced and more frequent related services



Full-Time Social Worker (FTE neutral reallocation)

By strategically reallocating an unfilled math position, this **FTE-neutral** shift addresses a significant surge in Tier II and III caseloads that already match last year's year-end totals.

A full-time social worker will help provide intervention and the family supports necessary to manage this growing student need.

**Thank you for your
continued support.**