

Special Education Paraeducator (Inclusion) Activities (212 FTE)

Activity	% time spent
Student instruction or support	66%
Total direct service	66%
Planning/ materials preparation	9%
Assigned school duties (i.e. bus duty, lunch duty, etc.)	7%
Personal lunch	7%
Student transition/ escort	2%
Attend meeting	1%
Data collection	1%
Behavior intervention plan	<1%
Parent communication (email, phone, in-person)	<1%
Implementation of specialized methodologies	<1%
Travel	<1%
Under reported	5%
Total Indirect Service	34%

5b. Implementing the Shift

Implementing changes such as shifting staff schedules to spend more time with students will require focus and effort on the part of the district. To accomplish this, it can help to designate staff in the district to support scheduling and managing the daily activities of special education staff.

In the HCPSS there are a variety of special education leaders, both at the school and district level that could fill this role, including resource teachers, instructional facilitators, and secondary instructional team leaders. Interviews indicated that oftentimes the roles and responsibilities of each of these three groups are ambiguous or overlapping. While redefining these roles, the district could include a new expectation that some will manage the schedules and service delivery model.

V. HCPSS Implementation Plan

Based on identified opportunities and key findings, an implementation plan is being developed that focuses on 8 key areas to improve student learning outcomes, address efficiencies within current practices and processes, target customized learning experiences, and ensure the hiring and retention of highly skilled, highly trained, and highly effective staff.

1. Elementary Reading
Ensure all elementary students who struggle, including those with disabilities, will achieve grade level reading proficiency. Highly skilled, highly trained, highly effective teachers will provide additional time on task to address instructional gaps and support the attainment of reading proficiency.
2. Secondary Reading
Ensure all secondary students who struggle, including those with disabilities, will achieve grade level proficiency in reading. Highly skilled, highly trained, highly effective teachers will provide additional time on task to address instructional gaps and support reading proficiency.
3. Elementary Mathematics
Ensure all elementary students who struggle, including those with disabilities, will achieve grade level proficiency in mathematics. Highly skilled, highly trained, highly effective teachers will provide additional time on task to address instructional gaps and support mathematics proficiency.
4. Secondary Mathematics
Examine middle school and high school course options that provide students who are struggling in mathematics, including those with disabilities, additional instructional time.

5. **Staffing**

Ensure all students who are struggling in mathematics, ELA and reading, including those with disabilities, will receive rigorous instruction and additional interventions by highly skilled, highly trained, and highly effective teachers.

6. **Related Service Providers**

Increase direct service time that occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech-language pathologists, and psychologists work directly with students by decreasing inefficiencies.

7. **IEP Process Efficiencies**

Examine the current IEP process and associated tasks and implement efficiencies to provide increased time for special education teachers to support student learning.

8. **Central Office Leadership**

Redefine roles and responsibilities within the Department of Special Education and Student Services (DSESS) Central Office leadership staff and school-based administrators.

VI. Collaboration

The DMC and DSESS leadership met with system leaders and parent/community stakeholders to review identified commendations and opportunities as well as key areas of focus. The system leader stakeholder group included representatives from school administration, curriculum and instruction, and DSESS.

The parent community stakeholder group included representatives from the Special Education Community Advisory Committee (SECAC), The Arc of Howard County, Howard County Autism Society, Gifted and Talented Learning Disabled, Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD), University of Maryland Department of Special Education, and Parents Place of Maryland.

Collaboration with stakeholder groups across the district and community will be ongoing.

VII. Next Steps

The HCPSS embraces the opportunities for improvement efforts that will positively impact student achievement. As staff engage in a process of continuous improvement, actions will be taken to provide highly skilled, highly trained, highly effective teachers to ensure that all students have access to a rigorous instructional program.

January 29, 2015

Special Education Opportunities Review

*Patricia Daley, Executive Director Special Education
and Student Services, HCPSS*

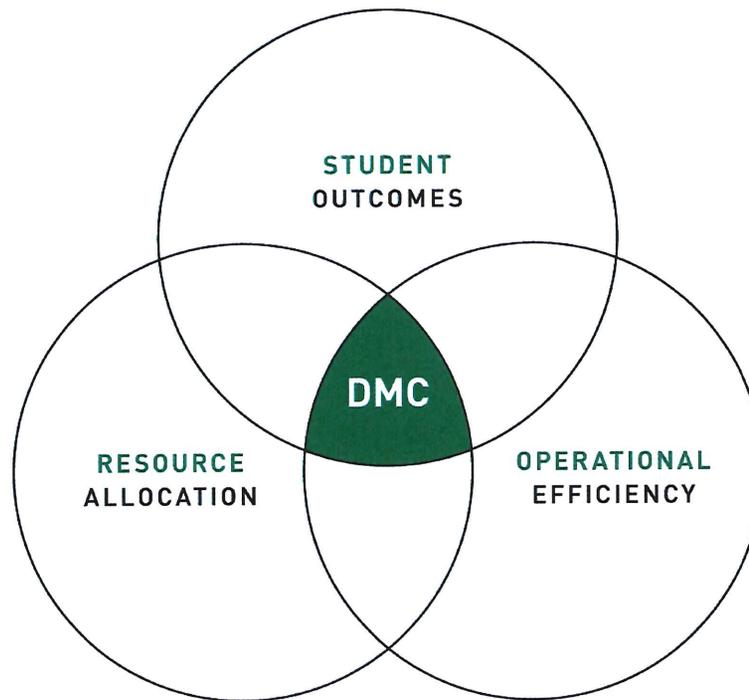
*Nathan Levenson, President, District Management
Council*



The District Management Council (DMC)'s mission is to achieve systemic improvement in public education.

DMC's Mission

The District Management Council was founded in 2004 to help address the most pressing and important challenges facing K-12 leaders.



DMC believes that strengthening the management capacity of school district leaders is essential for raising student achievement, improving operational efficiency, and allocating resources more effectively.

The special education and struggling students opportunities review had three goals.

Goals

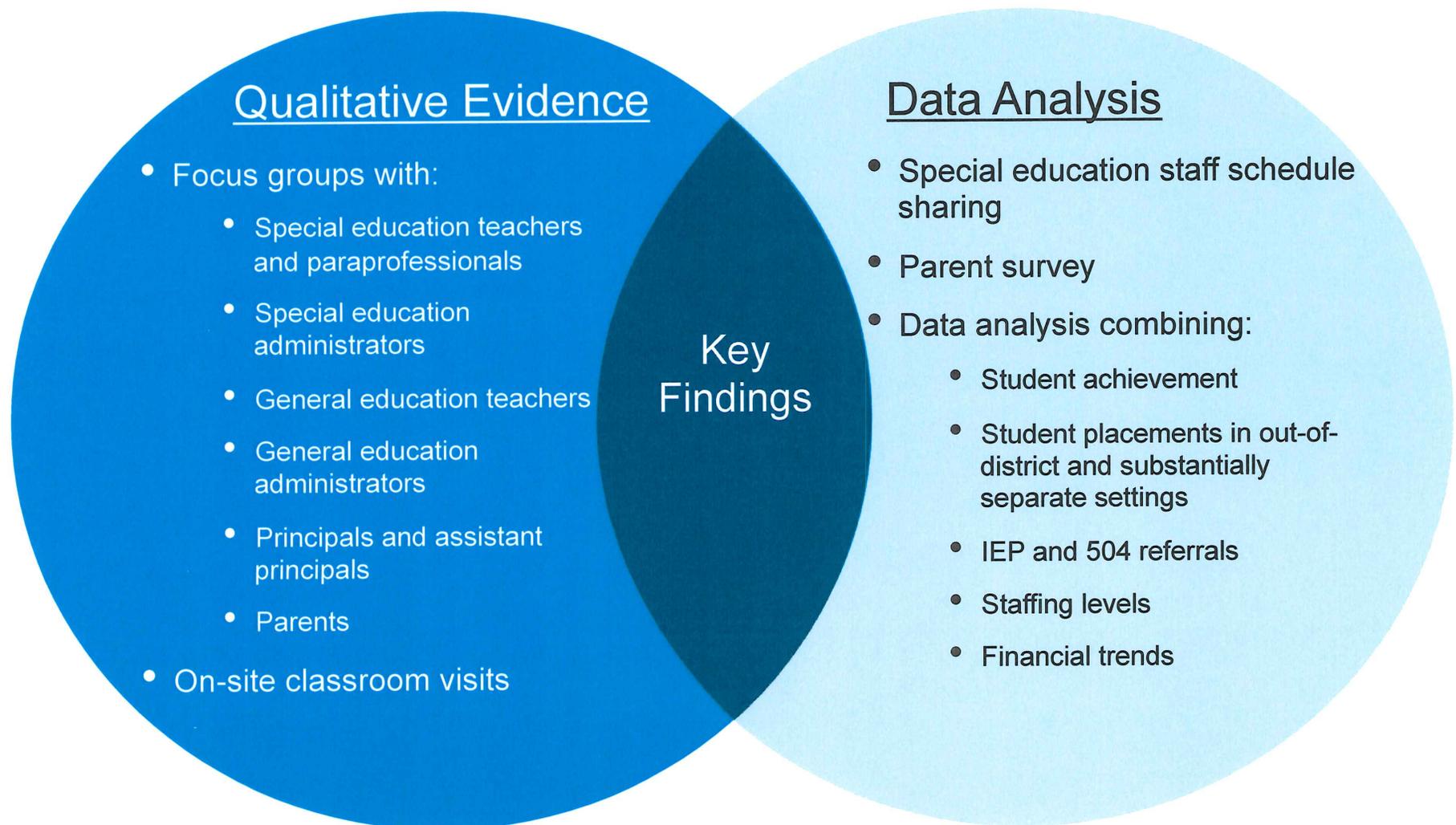
1 To gain a deep understanding of the current status of services for struggling students with and without an IEP.

2 To compare current practices to best practices.

3 To provide a short list of high leverage recommendations to improve student outcomes that are cost effective and consistent with district values.

The study combined significant qualitative evidence and robust data analysis to identify the highest leverage opportunities.

Methodology



The district has many strengths to be proud of within special education and the district as a whole.

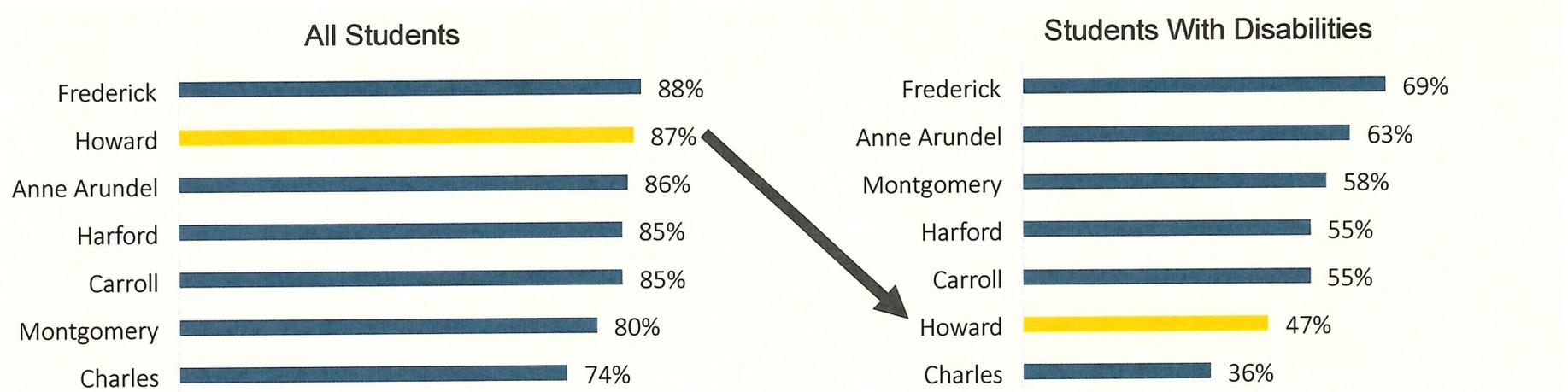
Commendations

1. The district is committed to providing an inclusive education for students with disabilities.
2. The leadership in the district is “forward thinking” and the staff embrace a culture of continuous improvement.
3. The district has robust capacity and systems to collect and manage a variety of student and staff data.
4. The district is proactive in seeking opportunities to improve its budget practices and to expand its capacity to analyze financial data.
5. Students are identified for special education at a reasonable rate.

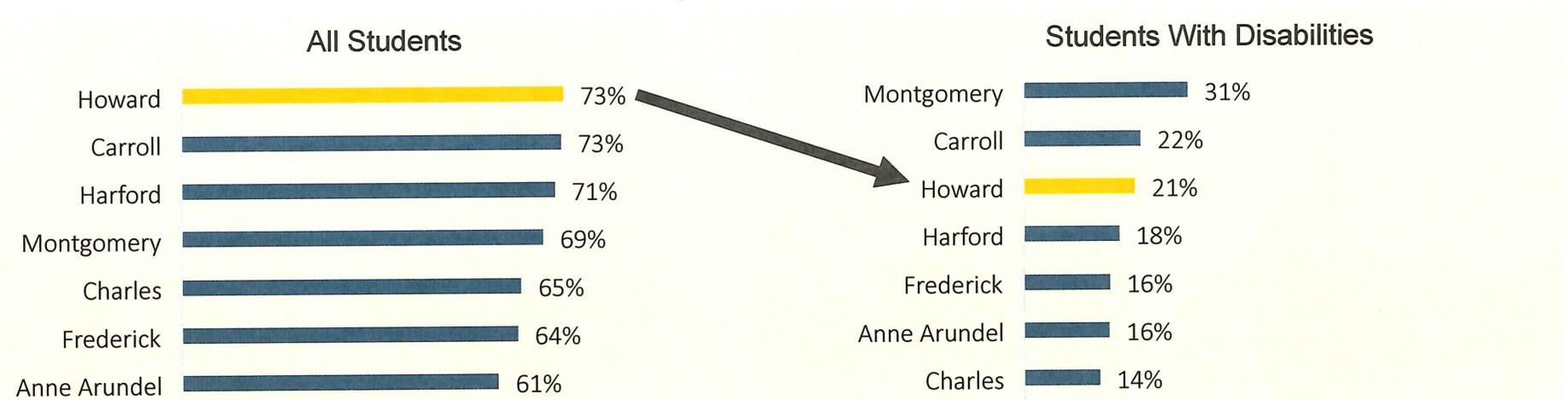
Students with disabilities in the district do not achieve at the same levels as in like communities.

2013-14 MSA Scores

Third Grade Reading

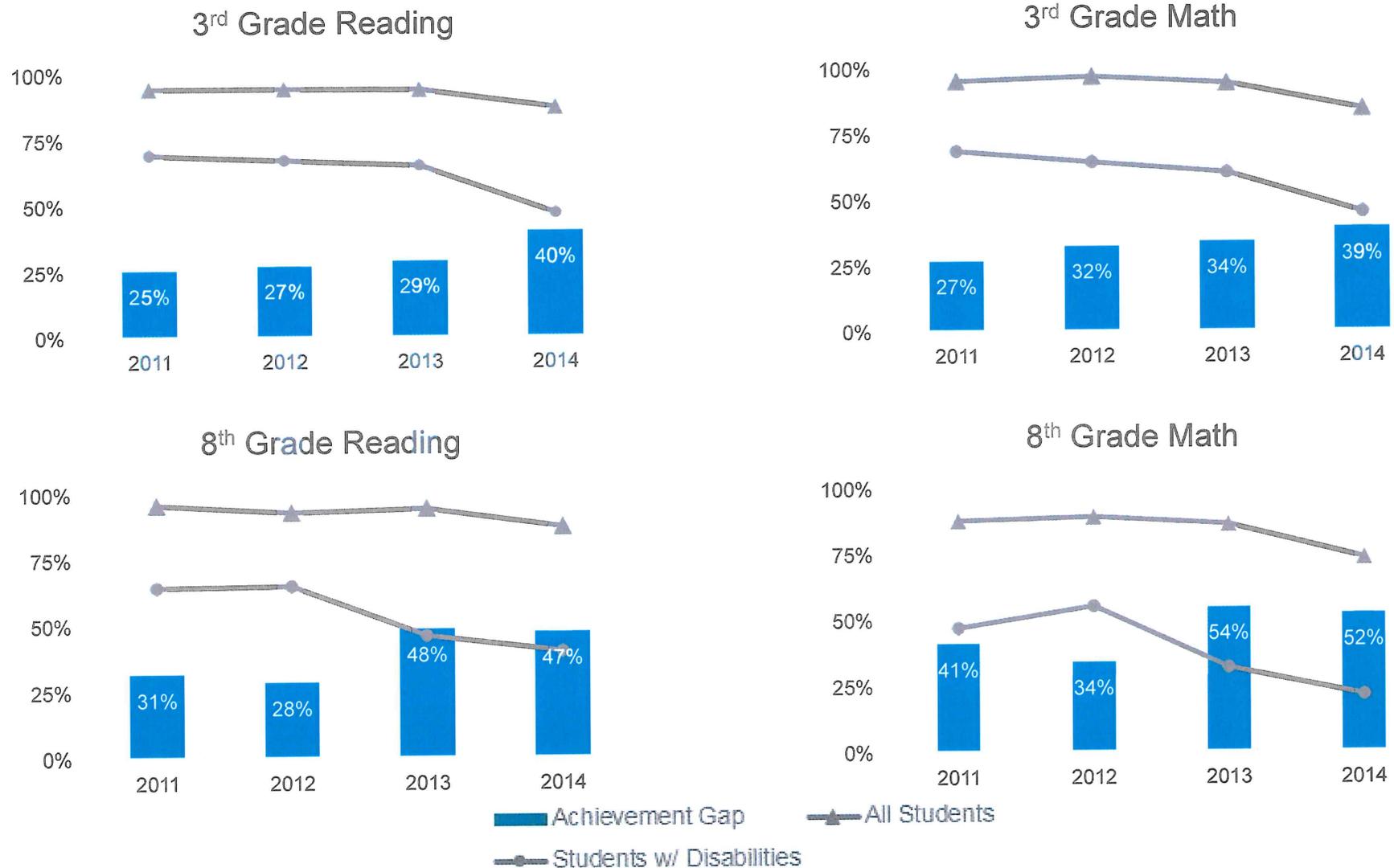


Eighth Grade Math



Students with IEPs have experienced significantly greater decreases in performance than students overall during the shift to Common Core.

Howard County Achievement Gap, 2011-2014



Six opportunities to improve outcomes for struggling students with and without disabilities were identified.

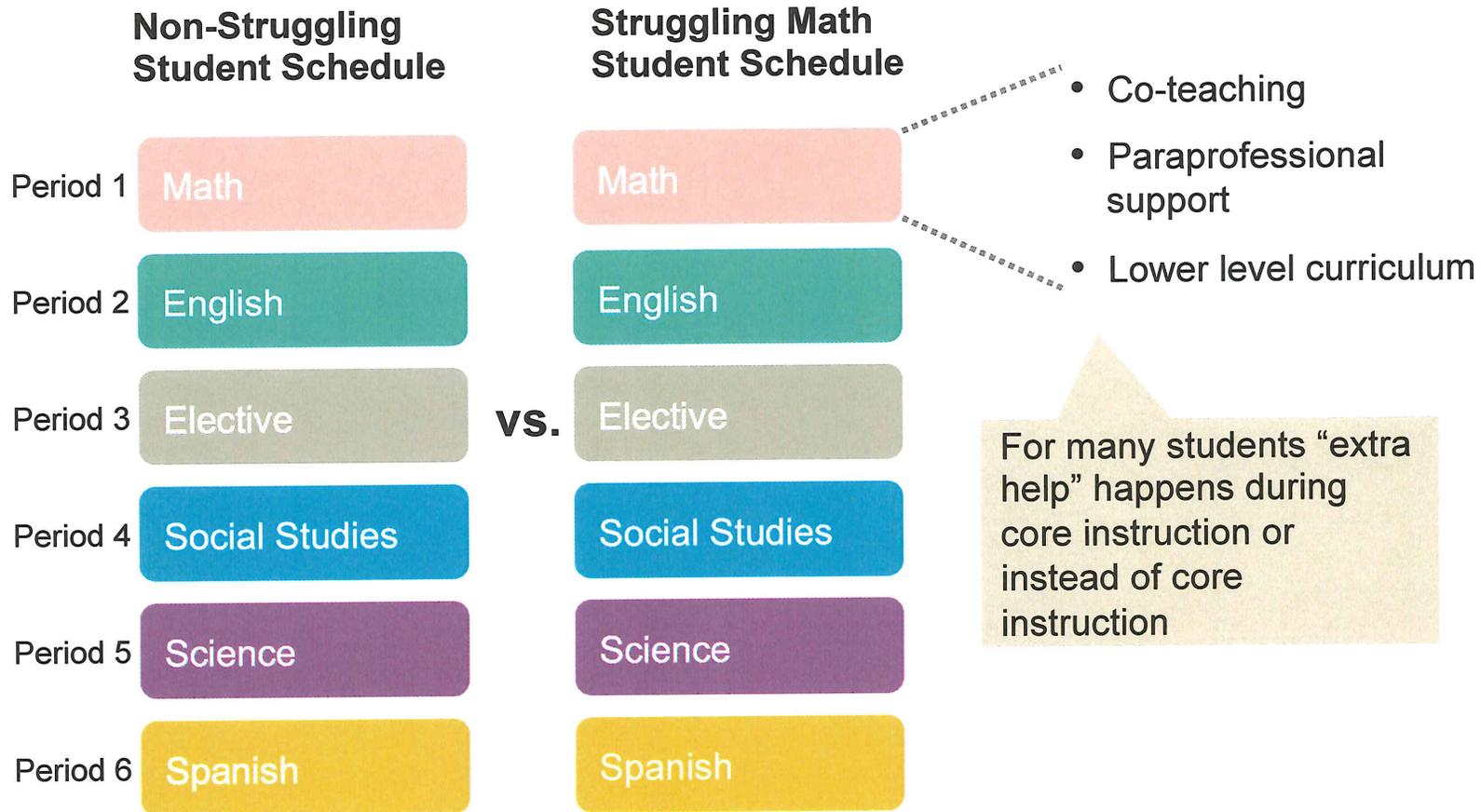
Opportunities

1. Consider providing more **time on task** for all students who struggle in order for them to master grade level content.
2. Ensure that students who struggle receive instruction from instructors with **subject-specific** training during core classes and interventions.
3. Consider shifting the **roles of paraprofessional staff** to emphasize providing nonacademic support, rather than content instruction, for students with mild to moderate disabilities.
4. Consider increasing the amount of time **related service providers** spend with students, while also closely managing group size through thoughtful scheduling.
5. Consider expanding the roles and responsibilities of school- and central office-based administrators to more closely **manage** how special education staff use their time.

Many struggling students get extra adults but not extra time.

Typical Intervention Strategy for Struggling Students

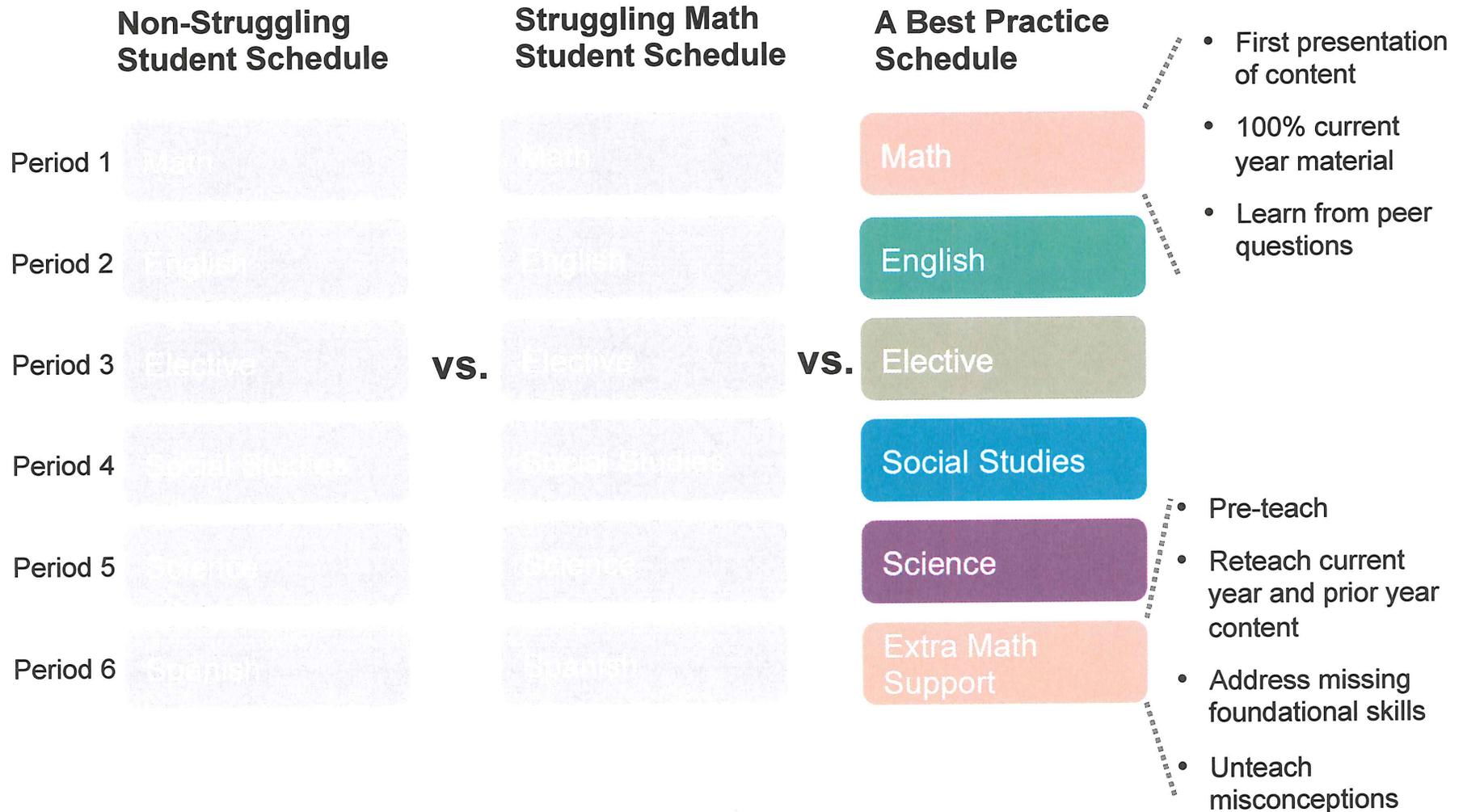
1: EXTRA TIME



Consider providing more time on task for all students who struggle in order for them to master grade level content.

Best Practice Intervention Strategy for Struggling Students

1: EXTRA TIME

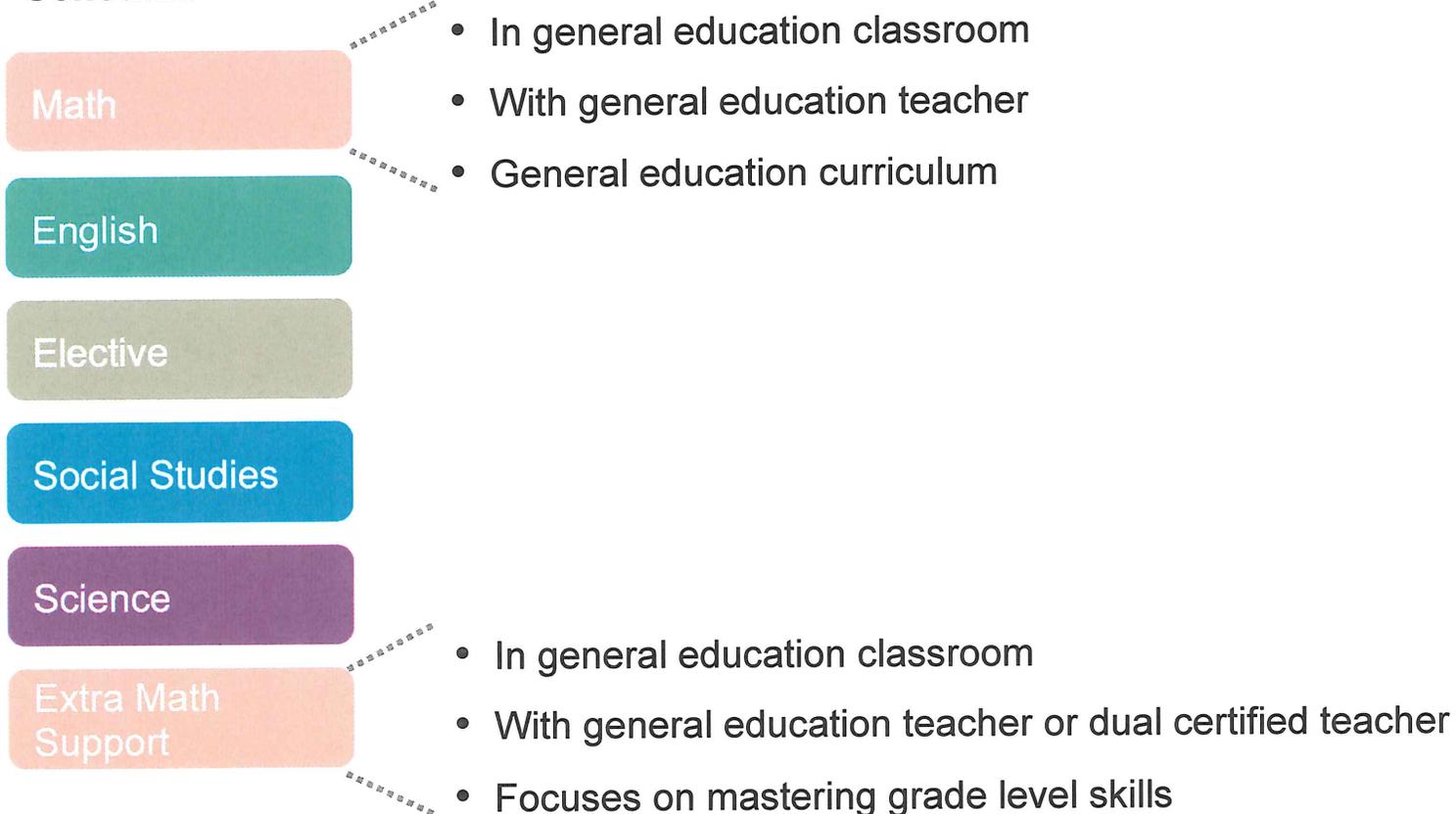


Extra time is a very inclusive practice.

Best Practice Schedule with Extra Time

1: EXTRA TIME

A Best Practice Schedule

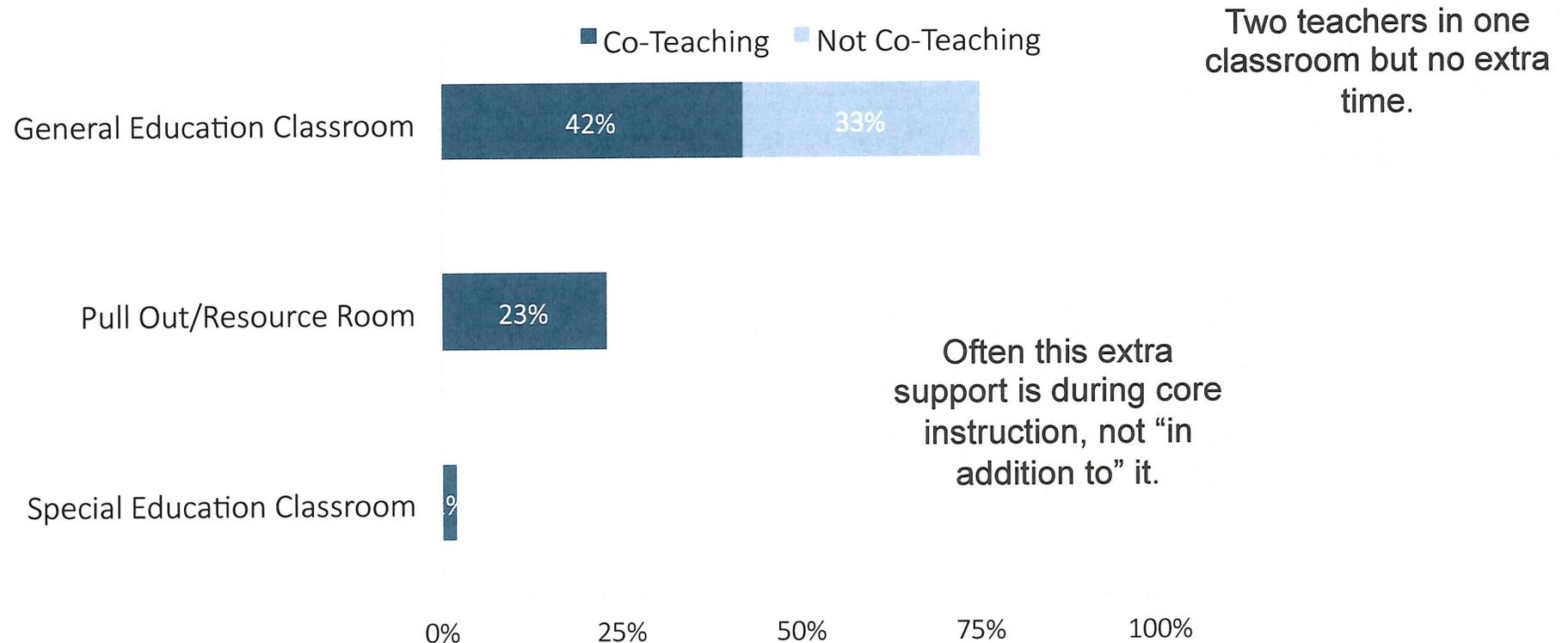


Few struggling readers at the elementary level receive extra time to master this critical skill.

Instructional Setting, Inclusion Special Education Teachers

1: EXTRA TIME

Elementary Level

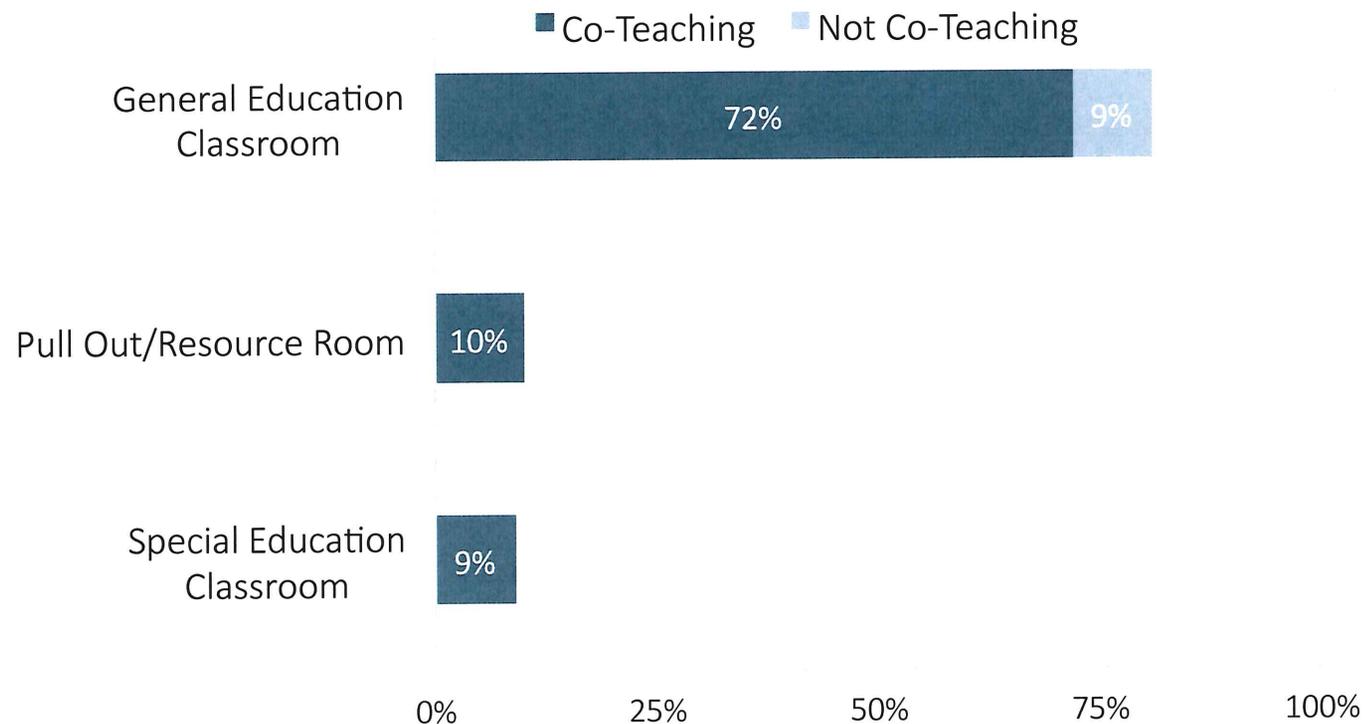


At the secondary level, “collaboration” is the most common form of special education support, which does not provide extra time.

Instructional Setting, Inclusion Special Education Teachers

1: EXTRA TIME

Secondary Level



Two adults but no extra time.

Ensure that students who struggle receive instruction from staff with subject-specific training during core classes and interventions.

Generalist vs. Content Strong Instructional Support

2: CONTENT STRONG

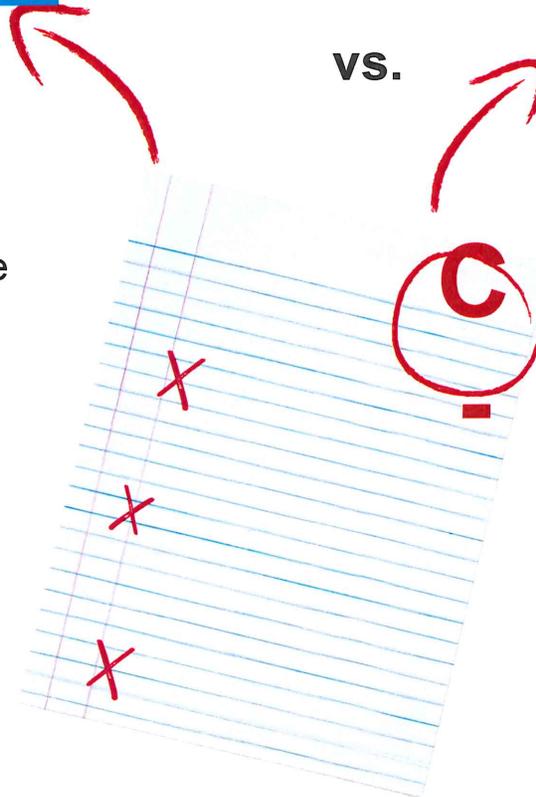
Generalist Support

- Review test questions and show correct answer
- Provide homework help
- Quiz in preparation for future tests

VS.

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



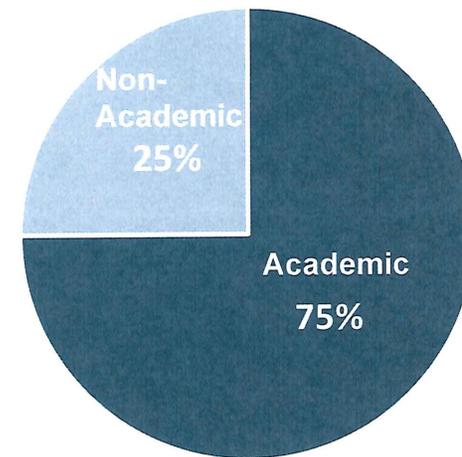
At the elementary level, some students receive extra help from content strong staff, but others do not.

Support Providers, Elementary Level

2: CONTENT STRONG

- Typical support providers at the elementary level include:
 - Reading teachers
 - Special education teachers
 - Paraprofessionals

Inclusion Paraprofessional Activities



Academic topic	% time spent
Reading	24%
Math	23%
Writing	12%
Social Studies	8%
Science	8%
Total academic instruction	75%

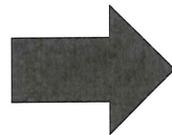
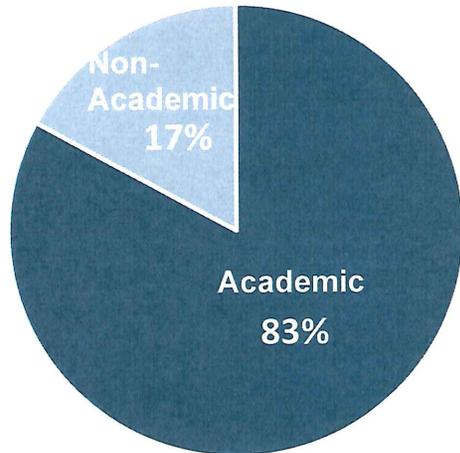
No general education paraprofessionals were included in this study.

At the secondary level, most extra help does not come from content strong staff.

Topic of Support, Secondary Level

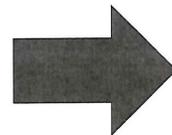
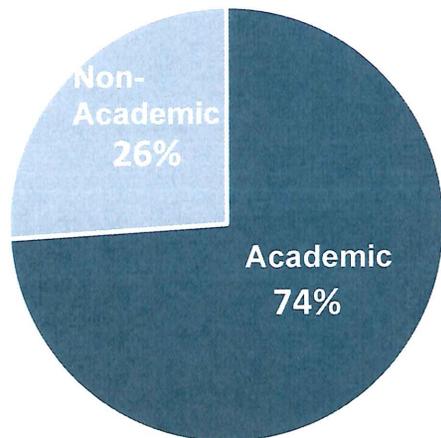
2: CONTENT STRONG

Special Education Teachers



Academic topic	MS	HS
Math	33%	22%
Writing	30%	12%
Reading	19%	17%
Science	6%	15%
Social Studies	5%	8%
Total academic instruction	92%	74%

Inclusion Paraprofessionals



Academic topic	MS	HS
Social Studies	26%	15%
Science	25%	17%
Math	16%	13%
Reading	10%	12%
Writing	5%	9%
Total academic instruction	82%	66%

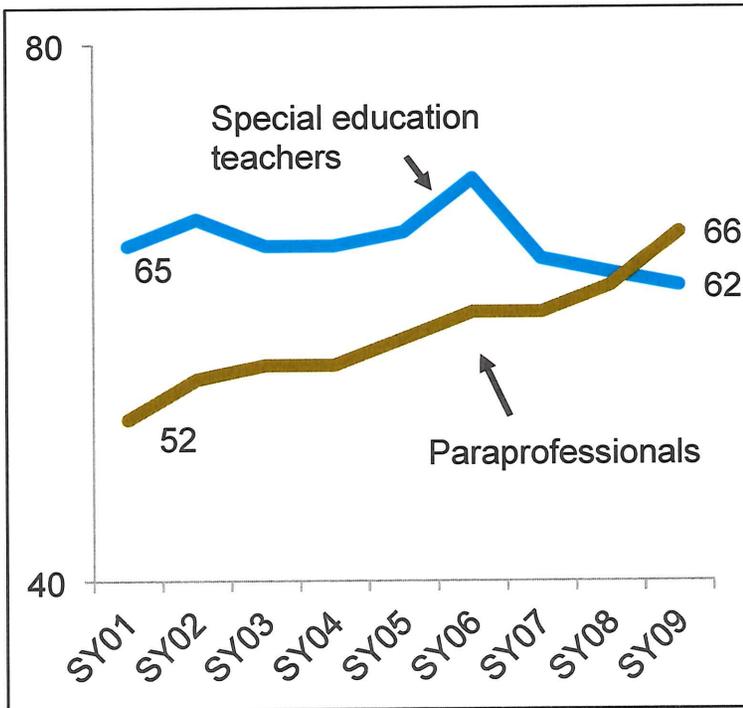
No general education paraprofessionals were included in this study.

Current district practices are very common but are not aligned with best practices for raising achievement of struggling students.

National Special Education Context

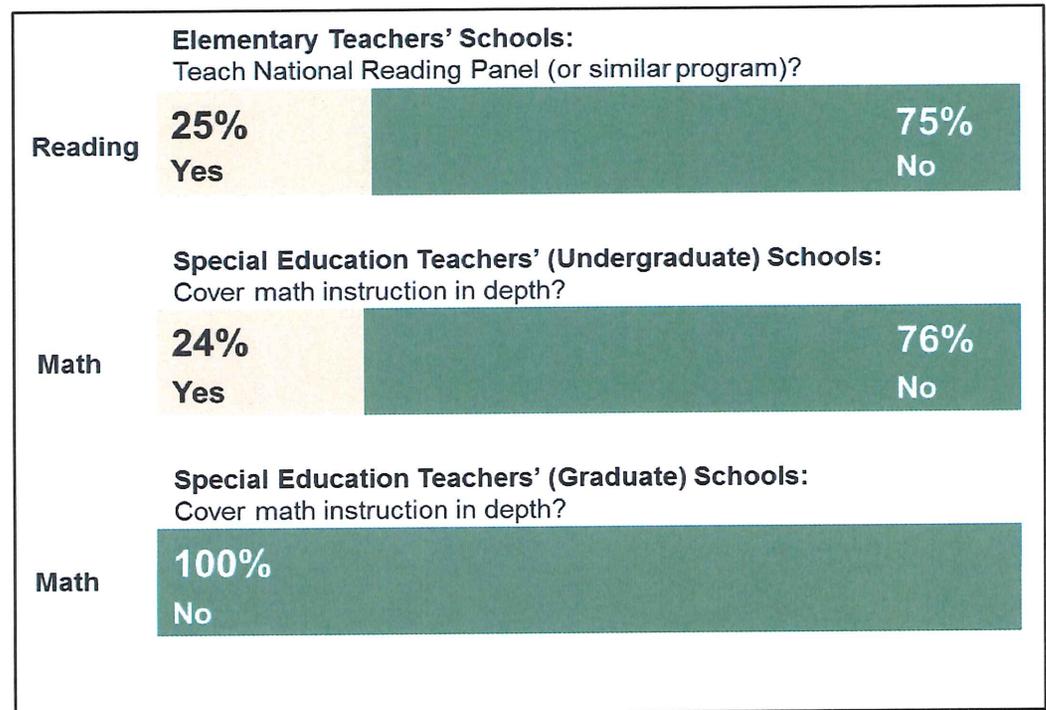
2: CONTENT STRONG

Special Education Teachers and Paraprofessionals per 1,000 Students



Source: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, "Shifting Trends in Special Education," 2011.

Selected Review of Teacher Prep Programs

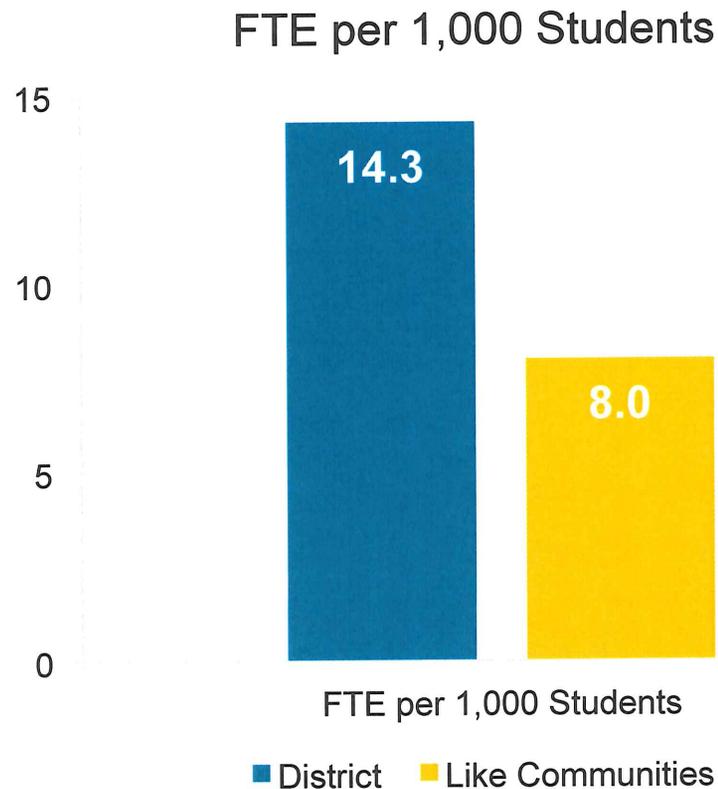


Source: National Council on Teacher Quality, "Teacher Prep Ratings," 2013.

Consider shifting the roles of paraprofessional staff to emphasize providing non-academic support, rather than content instruction.

Special Education Paraprofessional Staffing Levels

3: ROLE OF PARAPROFESSIONALS



More paraprofessionals...

- The district relies on paraprofessionals at a rate 1.8x that of similar districts
- The district could shift to staffing levels of like communities to free up resources for highly skilled reading and math specialists

Despite...

- Having fewer students with IEPs
- This analysis does not include the large numbers of general education paraprofessionals

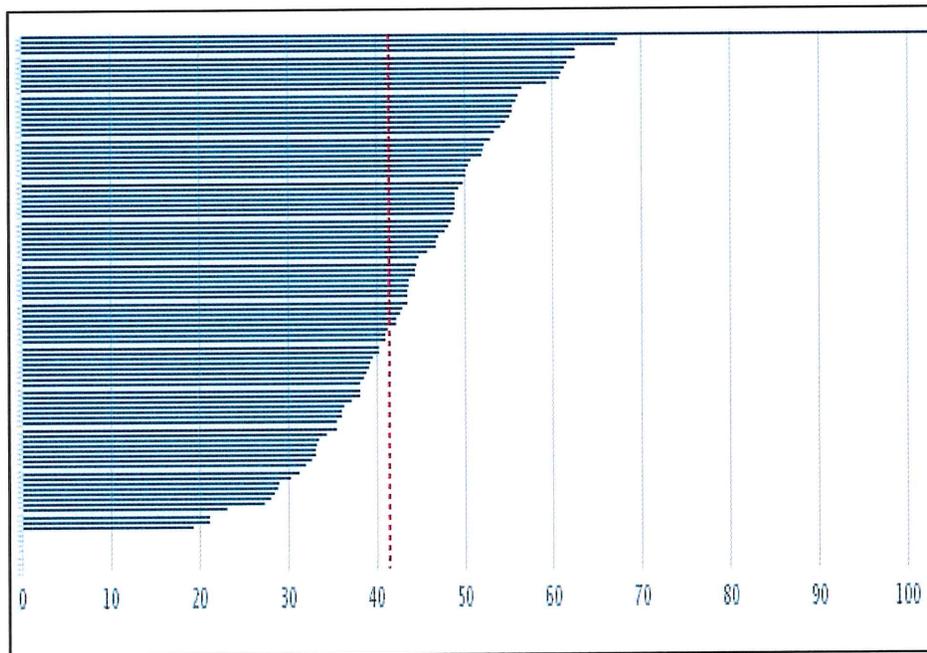
Consider increasing the amount of time related service providers spend with students

Speech and Language Therapists, Activity Data

4: RELATED SERVICES

% of Time Spent with Students

Avg: 41%



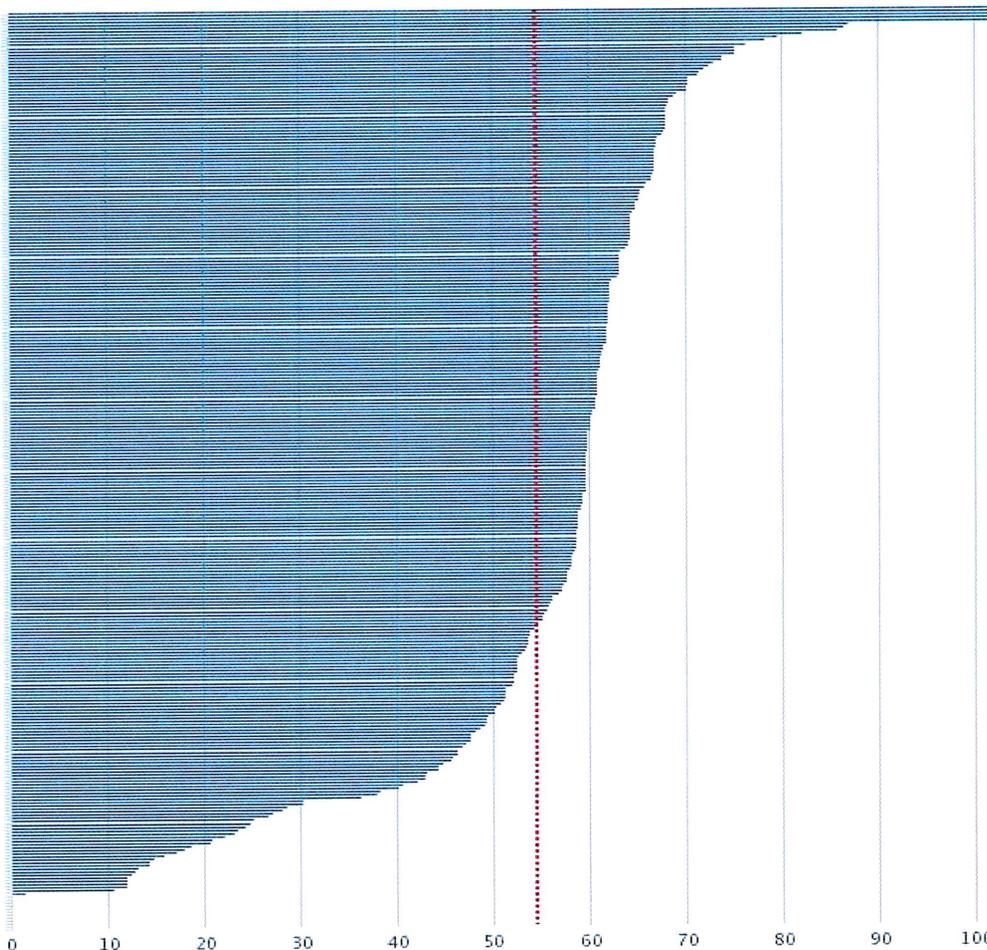
- HCPSS relies on SLPs at a rate 1.5x that of similar districts
- Similar patterns were found for OTs and PTs

Consider expanding the roles of school- and central office-based administrators to manage how special education staff use their time.

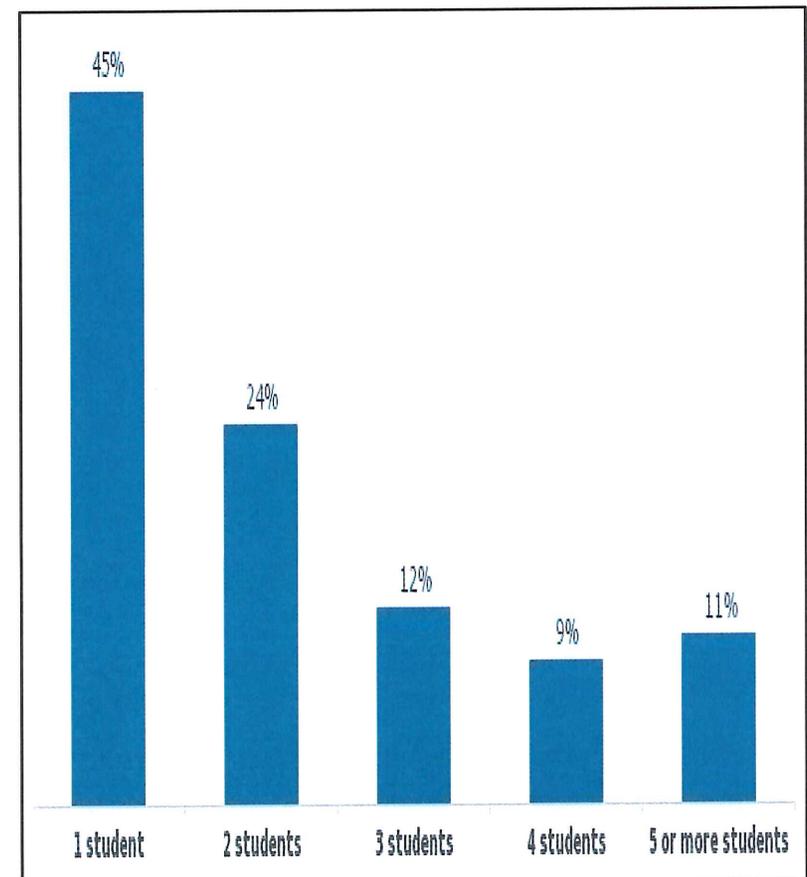
5: MANAGING STAFF TIME

Special Education Inclusion Teachers % of Time Spent with Students

Avg: 54%



Speech Therapists Group Size



HCPSS Beliefs and Core Values

“....No matter what your ability is, effort is what ignites that ability and turns it into accomplishment.”

Carol S. Dweck,

Mindset: The New Psychology Of Success



- Presuming Competence of all students, staff and families
- Implementing inclusive practices regardless of disability
- Students attending neighborhood schools; an emphasis on LRE



- Supporting co-teaching and collaborative planning for teachers
- Ensuring all teachers are skilled in teaching content and planning varied pedagogy
- Providing all students access to rigorous instruction taught by highly qualified teachers

