



Results of CCSD59's Equity Opportunity Review by District Management Group

School Board Report

January 24, 2022

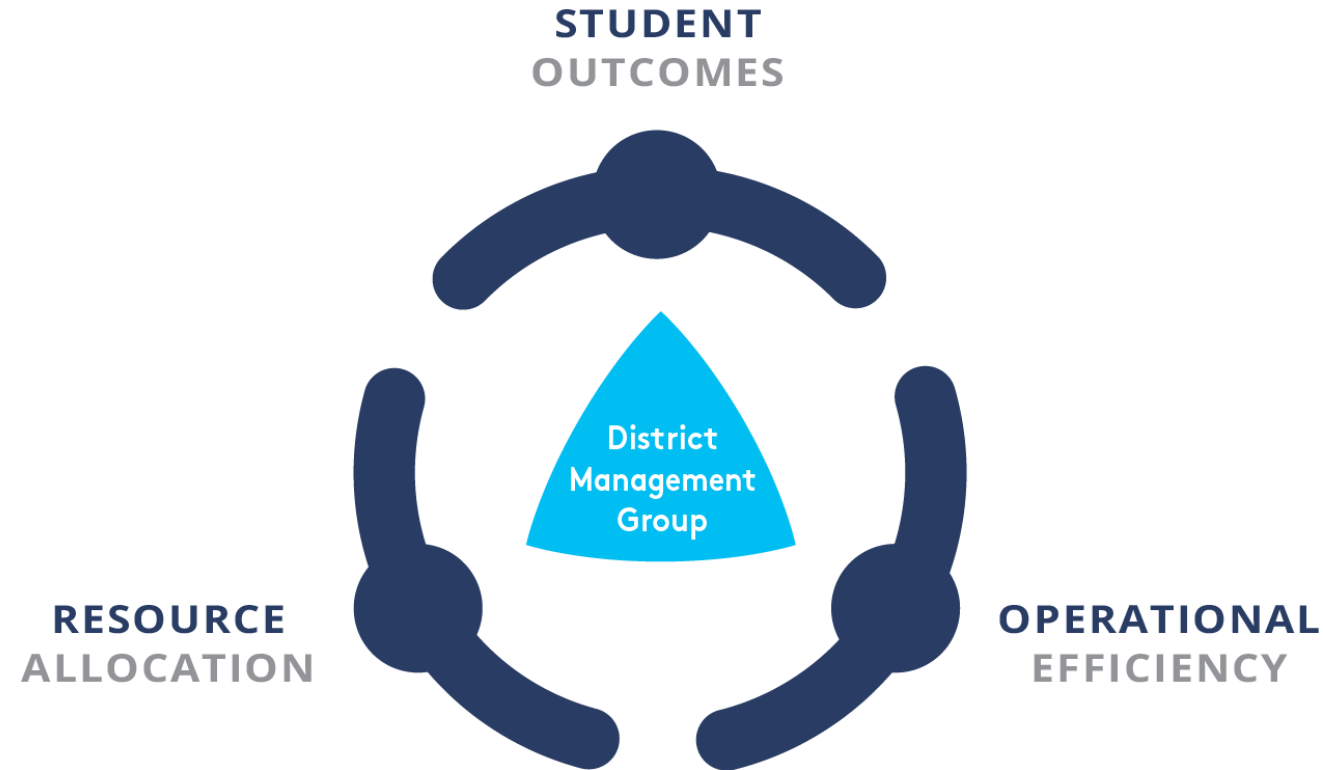


District Management Group | Helping Schools and Students Thrive

1	Introduction and Project Goals
2	DMEquityOffice Overview
3	Opportunity Review Methodology
4	Findings and Recommendations
5	Next Steps

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Our mission is to achieve systemic improvement in public education by combining management techniques and education best practices.



We believe that a district must focus on meeting all three of these objectives to achieve lasting results for students.

Founded in 2004, DMGroup has partnered with hundreds of school districts across the US, helping them address their most pressing needs.

All Sizes of Districts



1,700 students
Rural



5,000
Suburban



6,800
Suburban



10,600
Gateway



55,000
Urban



100,000
Urban

Nationwide Experience



California



Minnesota



Texas



South Dakota



Maryland



Illinois

All Types of Districts



Selected DMGroup Partner Districts

DM Learning



Best-in-class knowledge and professional development, and a membership community of forward-thinking leaders learning, sharing, and making a difference for students.

DM Solutions



Structured and facilitated approaches to deliver tangible solutions to district challenges.

DM Consulting



Customized management consulting support across a variety of practice areas.

DMGroup Service Team



Kristen Schnibbe Cervantes

Vice President, DMLearning



Rachel Klein

Project Manager, DMEquityOffice



Eréndira Flores

Equity Advisor, DMEquityOffice

Project Goals: Equity Opportunity Review and Sustained Supports

1

Gain a deep understanding of the ways in which CCSD 59 provides equitable learning environments and the **areas of opportunity** for development and growth.

2

Use comprehensive data to **prioritize** areas of inquiry and develop a long-term approach for addressing the most critical equity-related needs of the district, while managing costs.

3

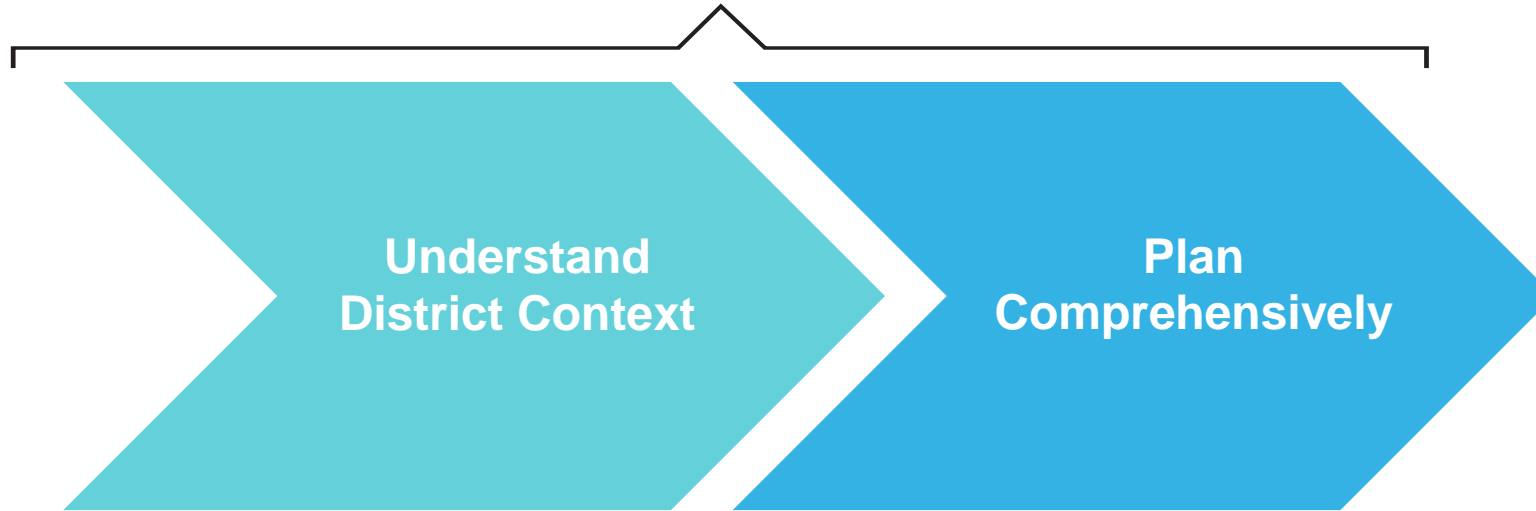
Strengthen internal capacity and **ongoing equity efforts** through a dedicated equity advisor, a curated resource library, and professional learning sessions.



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2	DMEquityOffice Overview
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DMEquityOffice Approach

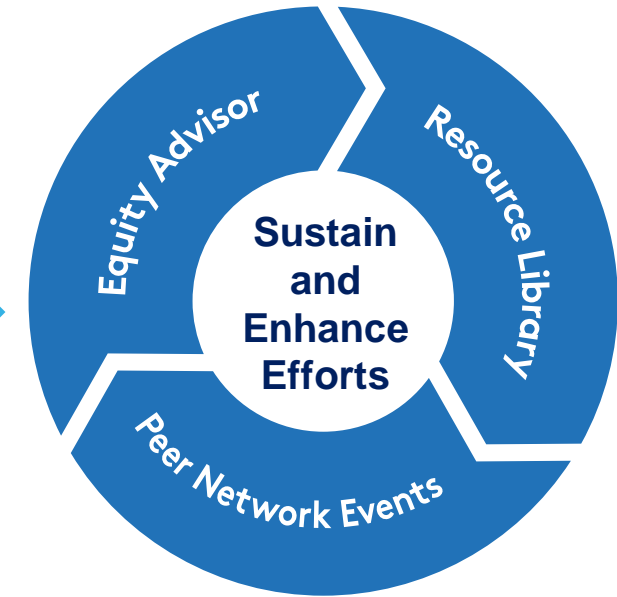
Equity Opportunity Review



Understand and prioritize misalignment perpetuating inequity by **reviewing district policies and practices** and comparing them to research and promising practices.

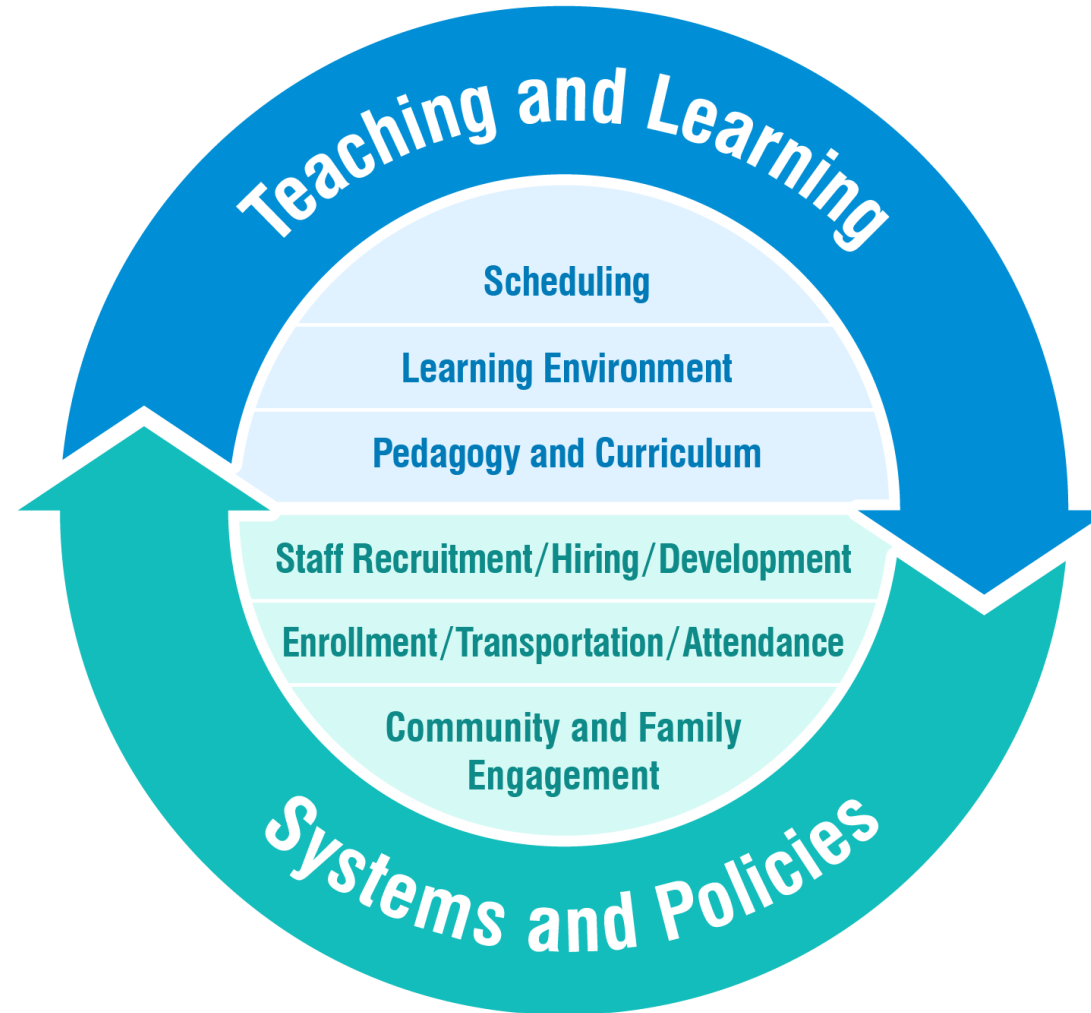
Support districts to **develop a vision and strategy** towards increasing equity district-wide.

Annual Partnership



Annual partnership to sustain focus, energy and direction, and enhance efforts.

DMGroup's Equity in Action Framework: Strengthening Equity of Opportunity for Students, Staff, and Communities



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4	Findings and Recommendations
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Equity Opportunity Review: Methodology

June – July 2021

Phase 1: Self Reflection



August – October 2021

Phase 2: In-Depth Analysis



To launch the Opportunity Review Process, district leaders identified an Equity Coalition and communicated the goals of the work with staff and families.

Name	Position
Dr. Terri Bresnahan	Superintendent
Tom Luedloff	Associate Superintendent
Dr. Katie Ahsell	Assistant Superintendent, student services
Ross Vittore	Assistant Superintendent, human resources
Dr. Nicole Robinson	Executive Director of Curriculum & Instruction
Ashley Robertson	Director of SEL and Student Equity
Jessica Goczowski	Elementary Teacher Rep
Kerry Frazier	Junior High Teacher Rep
Monika Farfan	Elementary Principal
Jason Jonas	Junior High Assistant Principal
Dr. Elizabeth deGruy	Executive Director of Educational Services
Ron O'Connor	Chief School Business Official

The **Equity Coalition** brought a **range of perspectives** from district leaders, school leaders, and building level staff. This group worked closely with DMGroup to ensure that the **values and priorities** of the district were at the core of the review and forefront in determining the path forward.

Equity Opportunity Review: Phase 1

Phase 1: Self Reflection

Quantitative
Data
Analysis

Self-
Reflection
Tool

Prioritize
Areas of
Focus

Phase 2: In-Depth Analysis

Data
Gathering

Analysis and
Discussion

Planning



Equity Opportunity Review: Methodology

Phase 1: Self Reflection

Quantitative Data Analysis

Self-Reflection Tool

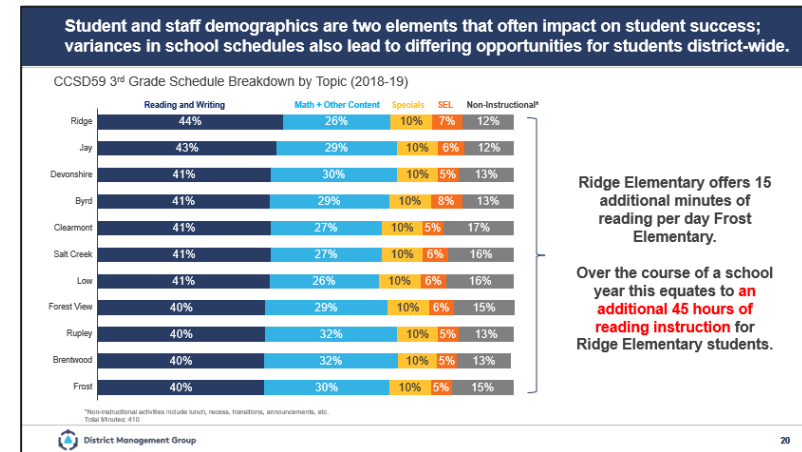
Prioritize Areas of Focus

MASTER DATA COLLECTION SPREADSHEET		
Community Consolidated School District 59		
DMEquityOffice SY 2018-2019 Data Request		
TABLE OF CONTENTS		
	Data tabs <i>Each tab is focused on collecting a certain area of data. Responsibility to pull data can be distributed across district staff or collected by a single person.</i>	Purpose <i>We will use the data in this tab to explore the following components of the Equity Framework</i>
1	School Data	Learning Environment, Enrollment and Transportation, and Students with Disabilities
2	Student Data	Cultural Competency, Pedagogy, Learning Environment, Students with Disabilities, Scheduling, and Enrollment and Transportation
3	Staff Data	Personnel, Learning Environment, and Students with Disabilities
4	Central Office/Leadership Data	Personnel and Enrollment and Transportation
5	Students with Disabilities	Students with Disabilities and Enrollment and Transportation
6	Student Attendance Data	Learning Environment and Students with Disabilities
7	Financial Data	Pedagogy, Enrollment and Transportation, Students with Disabilities, and Personnel



CCSD59 collected key data

- Student data
- School-based and central office staff data
- Attendance and discipline data
- Special Education data
- Financial data



DMGroup analyzed and presented key data to the Equity Coalition team

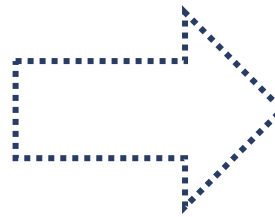
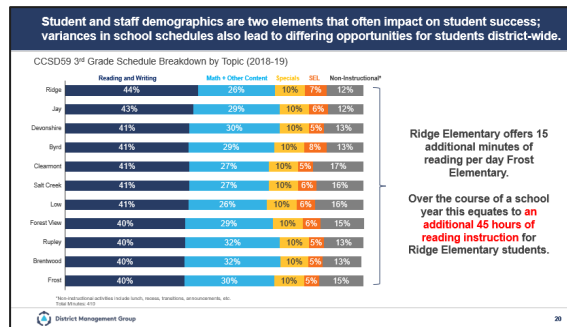
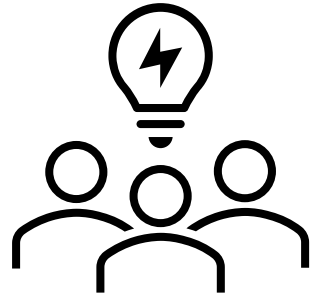
Equity Opportunity Review: Methodology

Phase 1: Self Reflection

Quantitative Data Analysis

Self-Reflection Tool

Prioritize Areas of Focus



Community and Family Engagement: Families and communities are viewed as critical members of a collective approach to nurturing children's learning and development. Relationships between district staff and families are grounded in mutual respect, trust, a shared vision, and authentic collaboration.

9. Our district welcomes and encourages every family to become active participants in the classroom and school community.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

Our staff do not actively or deliberately welcome all families to become participants in the classroom and school community and/or actively discourage their participation.

N/A*

The vast majority of our staff deliberately engage ALL families using a variety of culturally responsive practices and communication strategies that result in increased and more meaningful family participation in the classroom and/or school community.

10. Relationships between district staff and families are grounded in mutual respect, trust, a shared vision, and authentic collaboration.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

Leaders and teachers in our district do not express an interest in building strong relationships with families and the community and may see it as unrealistic or unimportant.

N/A*

Leaders and teachers in our district have strong, mutually beneficial, accountable and equitable relationships with families and the community (i.e. family and community members are partners in decision-making, have formal structures such as networking or advisory committees, etc.). They think creatively about how to build relationships with all family members, regardless of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status.

Equity Coalition used data analysis and personal experience to complete the Self-Reflection tool. The tool asked specific questions to help the district identify strengths and areas of need within the Equity Framework drivers

Equity Opportunity Review: Methodology

Phase 1: Self Reflection

Quantitative Data Analysis

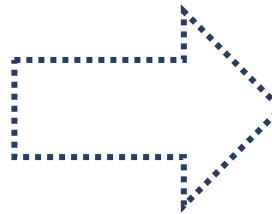
Self-Reflection Tool

Prioritize Areas of Focus

Enrollment & Transportation					
<i>School assignment, program enrollment, and transportation policies and procedures are designed and implemented to proactively prevent systematic differences in opportunities based on race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status.</i>					
Question 16	N/A	1	2	3	4 5
Question 17	N/A	1	2	3	4 5
Question 18	N/A	1	2	3	4 5

Coalition Notes (outstanding questions, disagreements, etc.)

Q16 & 18: Evidence of whole section - policies for enrollment and transportation have not changed for 20+ years. We have added some programs, but only some access. No evidence of equity considerations when conversations were had or programs added. Creative solutions are difficult to find in some situations. We have not looked at boundaries or other policies.



Enrollment and Transportation: Policies

The district's enrollment and transportation policies are outdated and therefore perpetuate inequities across racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and/or gendered lines.

Fully agree and believe we need to include some sort of review analysis of the implications of our decisions, based on those policies.

Based on initial assessment, I would agree.

Building capacity seems to have driven these decisions over the years. The struggle between being "neighborhood schools" while offering numerous programming options across 15 sites has been challenging.

The district has not prioritized reviewing enrollment and transportation policies in the last few decades because the cost and political impact on the district outweighed the potential equitable solutions.

District is in the midst of an enrollment study and hoping it will help drive decisions on programming

Need to consider ALL the lens when planning and acting.

My experience has been that anytime we have "tried" to dig into this type of review, the pressure, concerns, etc. from the community cause much of the discussions to be watered down.

Just the reality of the significant demographic and programming changes that have occurred since the policies were fully reviewed, updated, and implemented is an indication of the need to focus here.

Sometimes having available resources can cause decisions to be made more "quickly"

I think that policies haven't kept up with expansion of programs, so that each change in programming seems to tweak an existing policy (or is shoehorned to fit the policy), but this hasn't been considered

I am not sure of the reasons behind this, but the impact has resulted in inequitable solutions. TOTALLY AGREE - I don't know if the "because" part of the statement is true, but regardless, it hasn't been done.

I am hopeful the 3rd party enrollment study will provide a strong foundation of where we need to focus. At the same time, I am recognizing it is unlikely that we asked the outside group to focus on equity in their review.

In partnership with DMGroup, the Equity Coalition prioritized 3 areas for further analysis

1. Scheduling
2. Enrollment and Transportation
3. Students with Disabilities

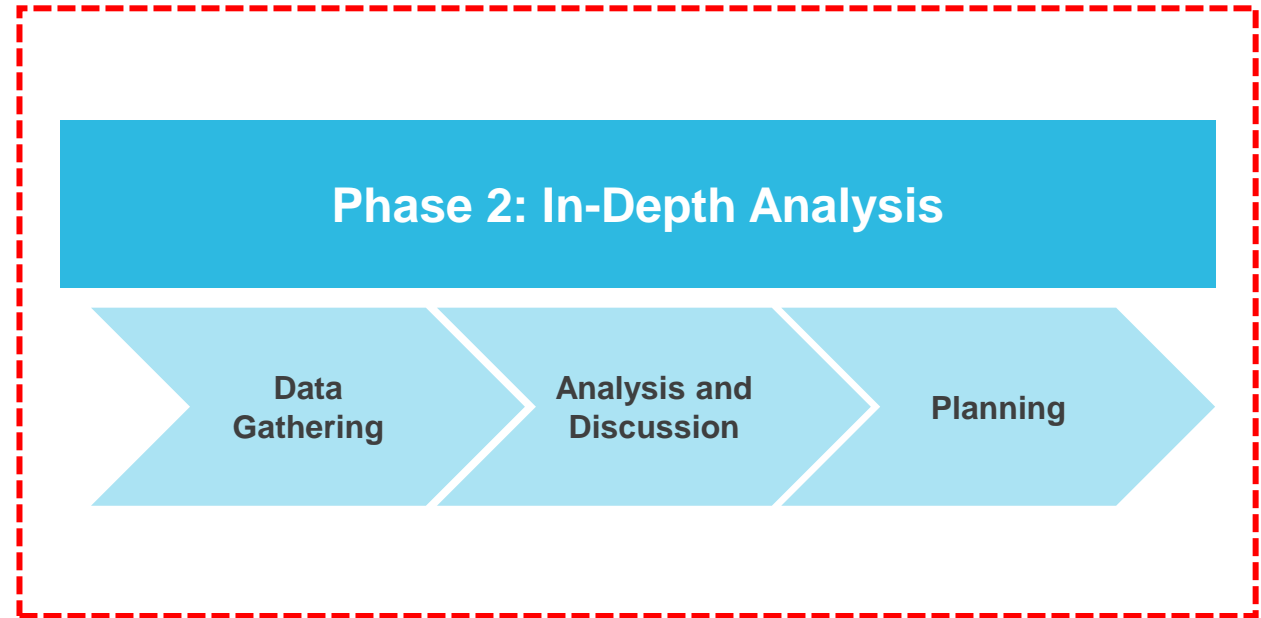
The Equity Coalition provided insight into hypothesis within the areas of focus to guide the direction of in-depth analysis

Equity Opportunity Review: Phase 2

Phase 1: Self Reflection



Phase 2: In-Depth Analysis



Equity Opportunity Review: Methodology

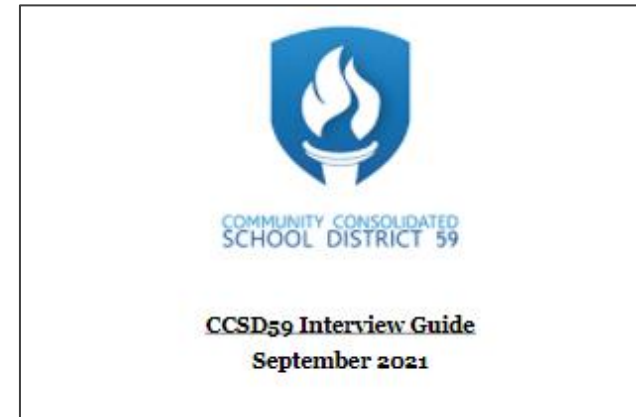
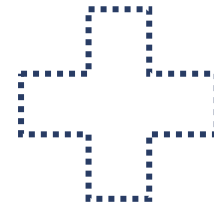
Phase 2: In-Depth Analysis

Data Gathering

Analysis and Discussion

Planning

MASTER DATA COLLECTION SPREADSHEET		
Community Consolidated School District 59		
DMEquityOffice Secondary Data Request		
TABLE OF CONTENTS		
Data tabs <i>Please feel free to collect the data in the format easiest for your team.</i>		Purpose
1	Student Data	To explore enrollment in specialized programs and determine how students with 504s may be impacting overall achievement data for students with disabilities
2	Elementary Staff Data	To understand to what extent students with disabilities are included in gen ed settings and to identify how students are distributed among staff
3	Junior High Course Data	To understand to what extent students with disabilities are included in gen ed settings
4	IEP Referral Data	To identify what proportion of students referred for special education evaluation are eligible for an IEP. If available, please include race and ethnicity breakdown, as well.



CCSD59 collected additional data

- Program enrollment and placement
- Scheduling guidance documents
- Special education achievement and referral data
- Class size and junior high courses
- Staff demographics
- Bus routes and times

- Input from **120+** district stakeholders
 - 11 interviews with district staff
 - 16 focus groups with school-based staff and leaders
 - 4 student focus groups
 - 5 family focus groups
- Guided by themes identified by the Equity Coalition

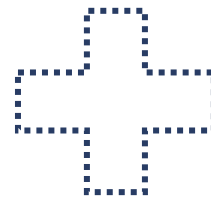
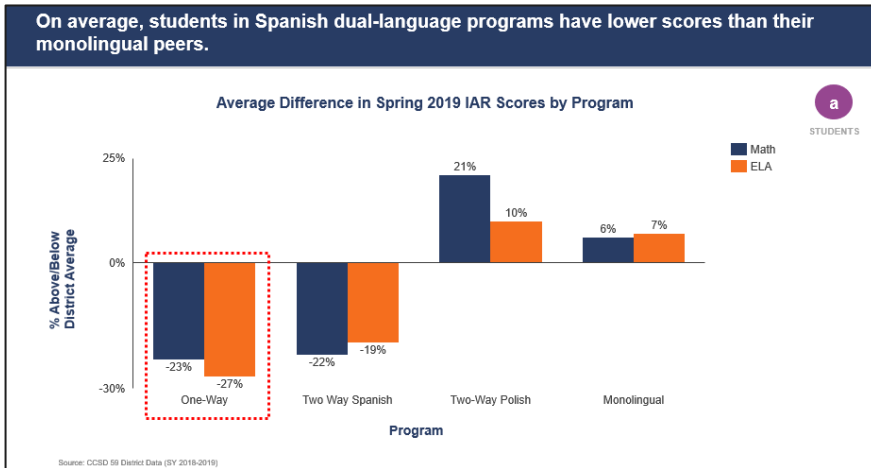
Equity Opportunity Review: Methodology

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Recommendations

Redefine the Role of Families

- Define the role of families in key district and school decisions.
- Develop structures to ensure that collaboration is proactive and authentic at the district, school, and classroom level.

Develop Structures for Two-Way Communication

- Consider a routine way of having families provide input and feedback on both student progress and district/school decisions.
- Reflect on staff feedback mechanisms and consider if there are ways to strengthen collaboration among families and staff and among leaders and staff.

Increase the Accessibility of Information

- Invest in making critical district information broadly available to families in multiple modes.
- Strengthen learning and efforts to make all communications accessible to families across languages and cultures.

DMGroup analyzed information from focus groups and interviews along with quantitative data to identify the root causes of systems perpetuating inequities among staff and students.

For each key finding, DMGroup provided recommendations for how CCSD59 could address existing inequities

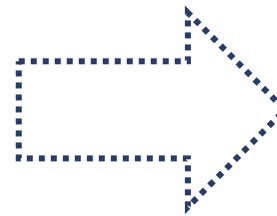
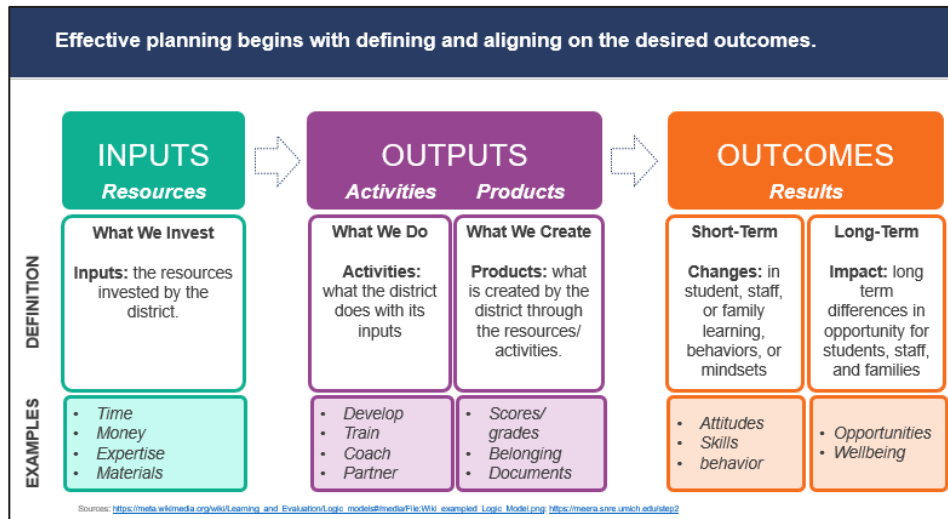
Equity Opportunity Review: Methodology

Phase 2: In-Depth Analysis

Data Gathering

Analysis and Discussion

Planning



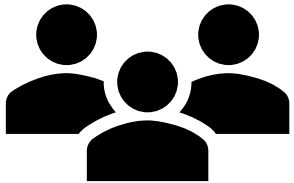
District leadership narrowed immediate focus to Scheduling and refining the Dual Language Program. Equity Coalition members participated in a facilitated session to define and align on the desired outcome for a refined Dual Language Program

CCSD59 leadership will continue to work with their Equity Advisor, Eréndira Flores, to develop the strategy and gain support to make progress on changes to schedules and the dual language program

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Celebrations!

1 Staff are caring and committed to supporting all students.



In focus groups and interviews, school-based staff and district leaders alike noted the staff's dedication to helping students succeed.

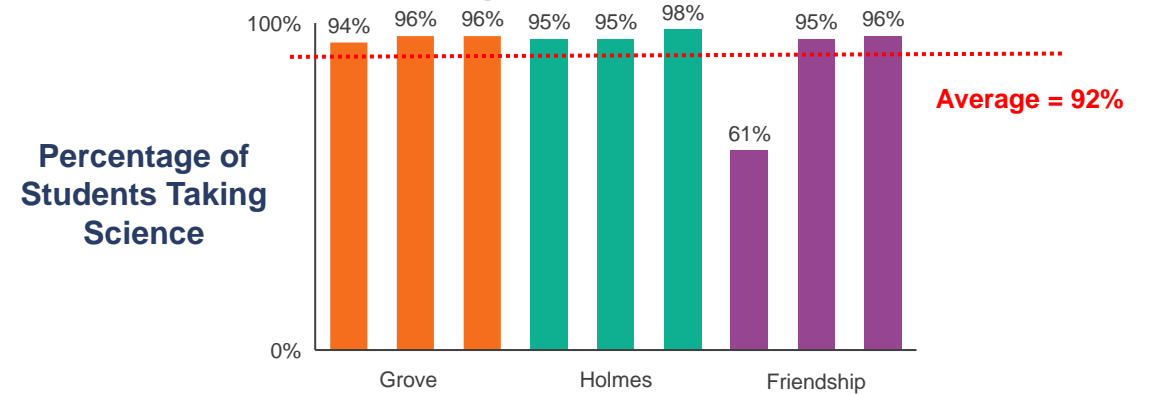
3 Day-to-day transportation is accessible and responsive to family needs.

70% of all students use district provided transportation

1 FTE dedicated to district-wide transportation services

98% of all students eligible for transportation ride the bus to school.

2 The district has made positive movement towards including students with disabilities in general education settings.



4 The district is well-resourced and some of those resources are used to increase access to opportunities for all students.

Multiple teachers and district leaders shared in focus groups and interviews that they have the materials they need to support instructional excellence and to provide extracurricular opportunities for students.



Based on the Opportunity Review Process, DMGroup identified the following 4 findings.

Key Findings

- 1** The effort to equally distribute dual language **programming** to all schools, has led to inequitable opportunities for students and staff.
- 2** Until recently, school leaders developed **schedules** as operational, rather than strategic, tools; schedules prioritized key constraints like special education schedules, union policies, and state guidelines.
- 3** Efforts to increase inclusion of **Students with Disabilities** in general education settings are complicated by the culture and systems that limit staff collaboration.
- 4** Most district and school-based **communications** are one-way, limiting opportunities for genuine collaboration with families.

Findings

1

The effort to equally distribute Spanish one-way dual language **programming** to all schools, has led to inequitable opportunities for students and staff.

a

Students participating in the dual language program are have lower scores, are taught by teachers with less experience, and have fewer opportunities for advanced coursework.

b

Staff teaching in the dual language program report feeling overworked and underappreciated leading to higher turnover in an already difficult to staff position.

c

Having a dual language program at every school puts a strain on limited bilingual staff **resources** district-wide.

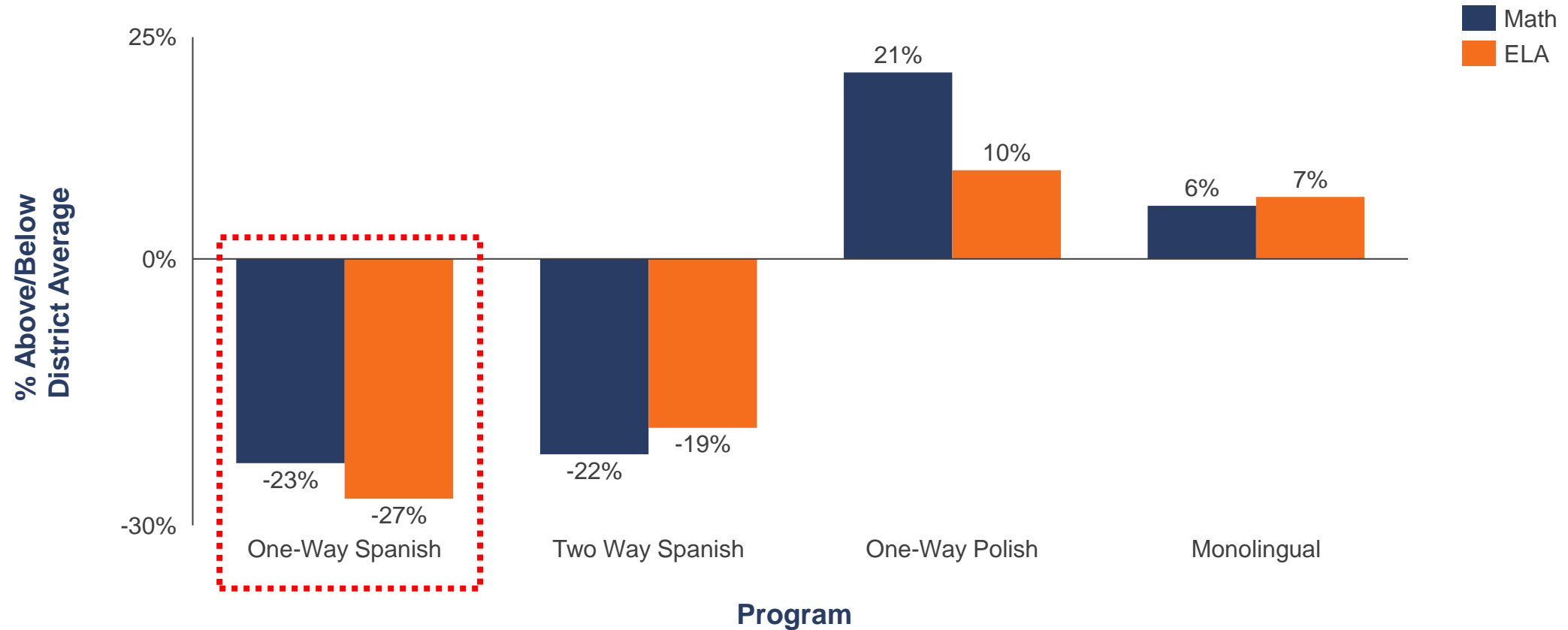


On average, students in the Spanish one-way dual-language program have lower scores than their monolingual peers.

Average Difference in Spring 2019 IAR Scores by Program

a

STUDENTS



Source: CCSD 59 District Data (SY 2018-2019)

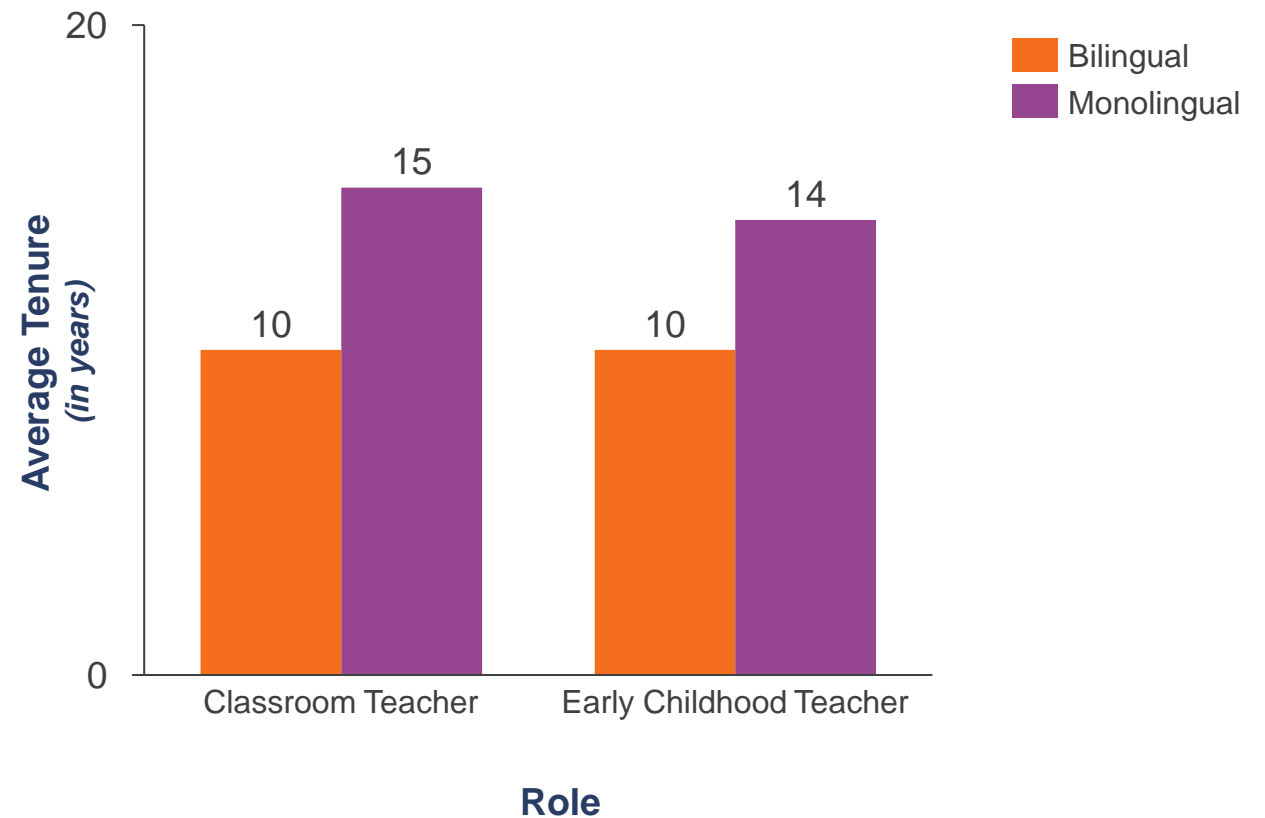
There is some evidence that bilingual classroom teachers have less experience than monolingual classroom teachers and lack fluency in language acquisition.



Focus Group/Interview Trends

- Bilingual teachers are hard to staff and turning over at higher rates
- Bilingual teachers are eligible for student teaching waivers to expedite hiring
- Bilingual teachers are missing a deep understanding of language development
- There has been limited district professional development provided in specific language acquisition strategies

Average CCSD59 Tenure of Elementary Classroom Teachers



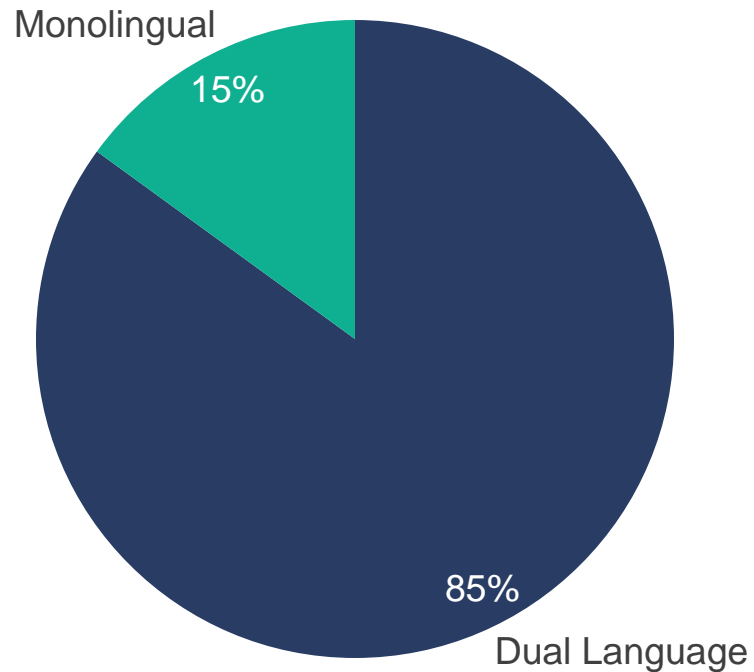
STUDENTS

Source: CCSD 59 District Data (SY 2018-2019); CCSD59 Interview/Focus Groups (2021)



Multi-age classes are more common in dual language settings than in monolingual settings.

Distribution of Multi-Age Classes, by Setting



Focus Group/Interview Trends



STUDENTS

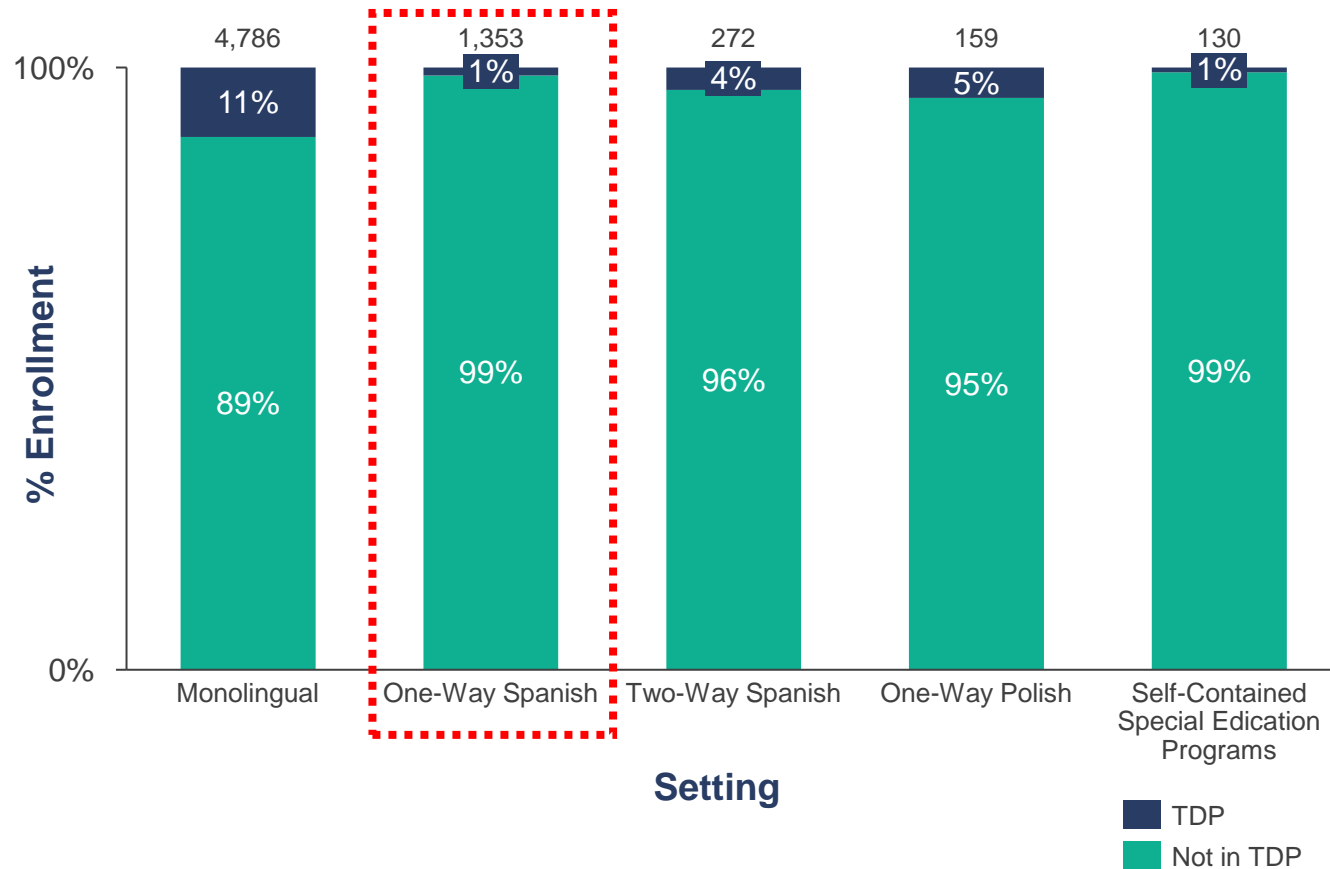
- Enrollment for students qualifying for dual language varies year-to-year because attendance boundaries have not been redesigned to reflect changing demographics
- Schools with small numbers of students qualifying for dual language often combine sections into multi-age classes
- Since the district has not formally adopted the approach of multi-age classrooms, teachers are not provided additional support; it's challenging for teachers to plan for and support students across multiple ages and curricular grades
- The burden of multi-age classrooms on teachers means students in these settings are not getting the same instructional attention available in monolingual classrooms

Source: CCSD59 Interview/Focus Groups (2021), CCSD59 District Data (SY18-19)



Students in the dual-language program are less likely to have opportunities for advanced coursework.

Percentage of Students Participating in Talent Development Program (TDP), by Classroom Setting



Source: CCSD59 Interview/Focus Groups (2021), CCSD59 District Data (SY18-19)



STUDENTS



Focus Group/Interview Trends

- Dual language students don't have the same access to gifted opportunities
- At the Junior High level, dual language is its own language program so students in dual language cannot participate in advanced language arts
- Higher level math opportunities at the Junior High level are limited because students in the dual language program come in from K-5 with lower math levels than their monolingual peers.

Dual language teachers report feeling lonely, over worked, and underappreciated.



Focus Group/Interview Trends



STAFF

- Schools with only one or two dual language sections limit opportunities for dual language teachers to collaborate with other staff, leaving dual language **teachers feeling isolated and lacking a sense of belonging**
- Because of a **lack of bilingual representation in leadership**, dual language staff feel they have to advocate more strongly for their voices to be heard and their needs to be met
- Bilingual **teachers feel overworked** from planning in two languages, translating when Spanish speaking staff are not present, and advocating for students and families who do not know their rights or are not comfortable speaking up
- High turnover among bilingual teachers is due in part to **burnout from feeling overworked.**

Source: CCSD59 Interview/Focus Groups (2021)



Having a dual language program at every school puts a strain on the limited bilingual staff resources in the district.



Focus Group/Interview Trends



RESOURCES

- The intention of putting a dual language program in all schools was to reduce the number of students requiring transportation, but now **most students use busses to get to school**
- With a small number of dual language sections at every school, the districts suffers from **not being able to benefit from economies of scale**; it is much more sustainable to staff fewer schools with a greater number of dual language sections than many schools with only a few dual language sections.
- In addition to the challenge of finding bilingual teachers, schools have difficulty finding enough staff to provide multilingual students with appropriate **intervention support, special education services, and family engagement.**
- **The resources needed to staff dual language sections at every school often doesn't match the student demand at each school** so students end up getting tracked and teachers don't have anyone with whom to collaborate.

Source: CCSD59 Interview/Focus Groups (2021)

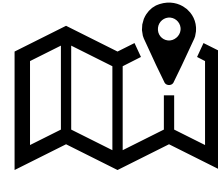


Recommendations



Rezone Attendance Boundaries

- Adjust zones to ensure more equitable allocation of students to existing sections.
- Analyze and revise boundaries based on numbers regularly.
- Provide the necessary transportation for all eligible students.



Reposition Programs

- Be more strategic in the placement of language sections.
- Consider consolidating sections or creating grade level centers to maintain consistent opportunities.
- Provide the necessary transportation for all eligible students.



Redesign Programs

- Consider intentionally designing the program to enable more equitable opportunities for students.
- Train all teachers on language acquisition and provide structures for collaboration.
- Consider interconnection of program access (special education, ESL, dual language, TDP, etc.).

Based on the Opportunity Review Process, DMGroup identified the following 4 findings.

Findings

- 1 The effort to equally distribute dual language **programming** to all schools, has led to inequitable opportunities for students and staff.
- 2 Until recently, school leaders developed **schedules** as operational, rather than strategic, tools; schedules prioritized key constraints like special education schedules, union policies, and state guidelines.
- 3 Efforts to increase inclusion of **Students with Disabilities** in general education settings are complicated by the culture and systems that limit staff collaboration.
- 4 Most district and school-based **communications** are one-way, limiting opportunities for genuine collaboration with families.

Findings

2

Until recently, school leaders developed **schedules** as operational, rather than strategic, tools; schedules prioritized key constraints like special education schedules, union policies, and state guidelines.

a

The district provides some **Elementary scheduling** guidance aligned to instructional promising practices, but stronger accountability would ensure that promising practices are being used across all schools.

b

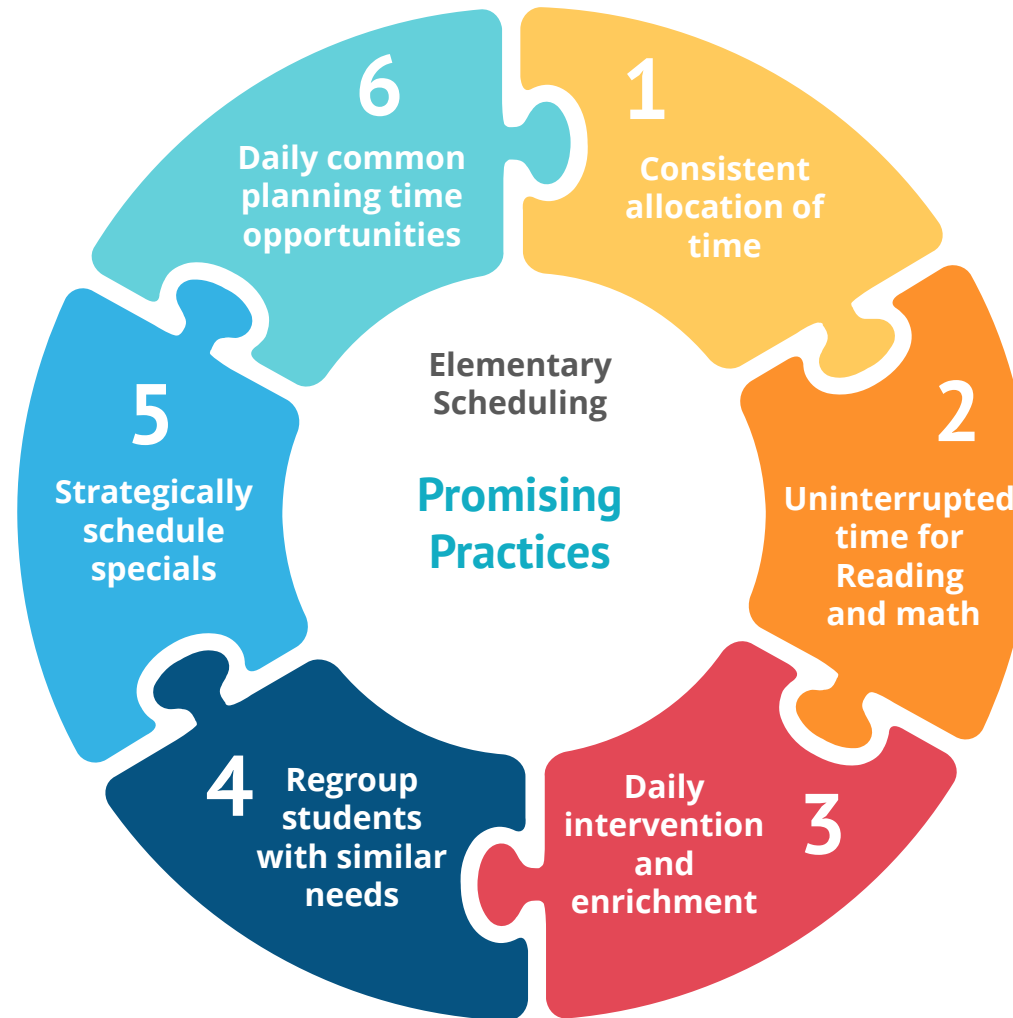
Until recently, the district has provided limited **Junior High scheduling** guidance and development on how to strategically create secondary schedules.



DMGroup's elementary promising practices remove barriers to learning for students and teaching for staff.

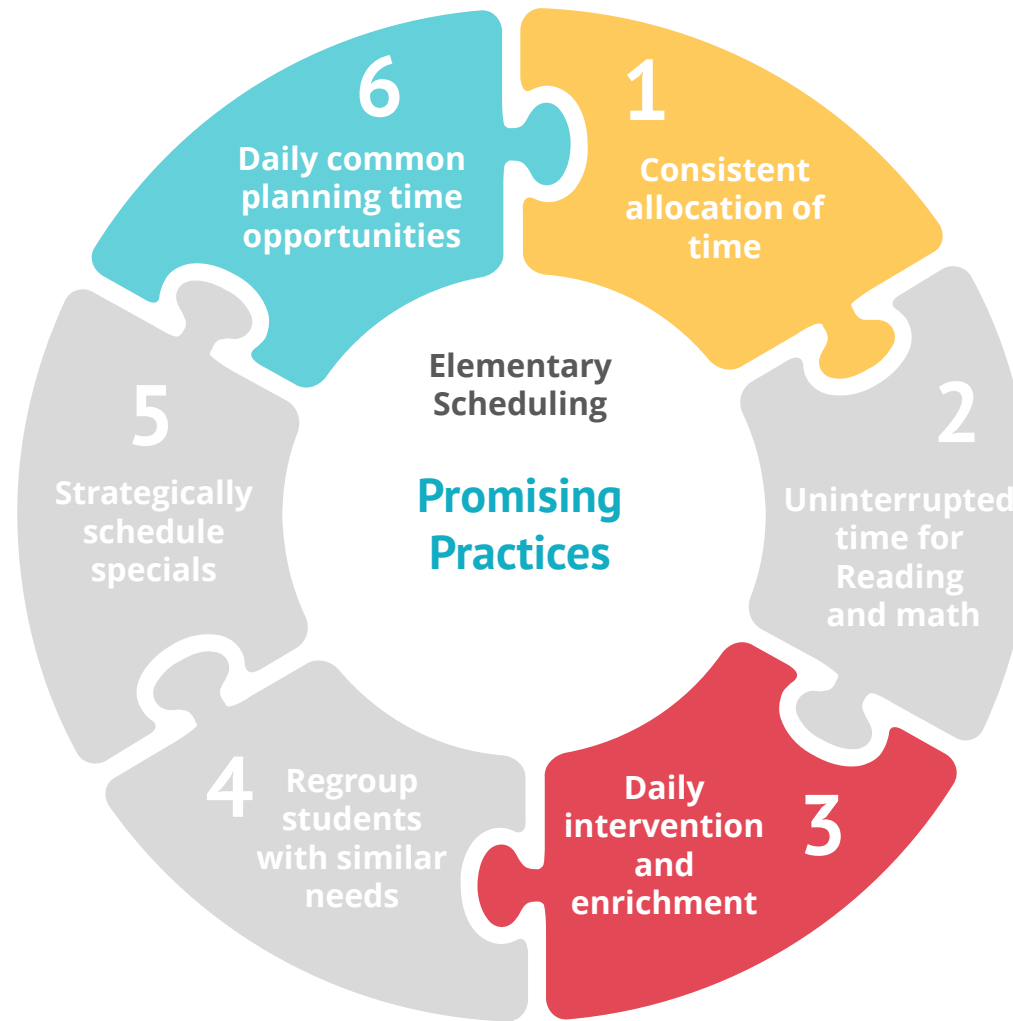
a

ELEMENTARY



Source: DMGroup Analysis

In this review, DMGroup identified strengths and areas of growth across 3 of the elementary scheduling promising practices.



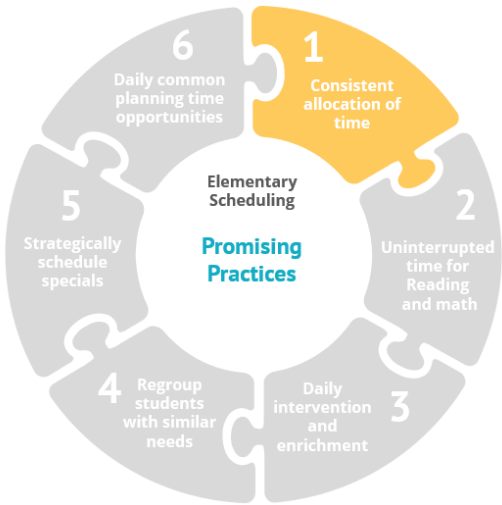
ELEMENTARY

Source: DMGroup Analysis

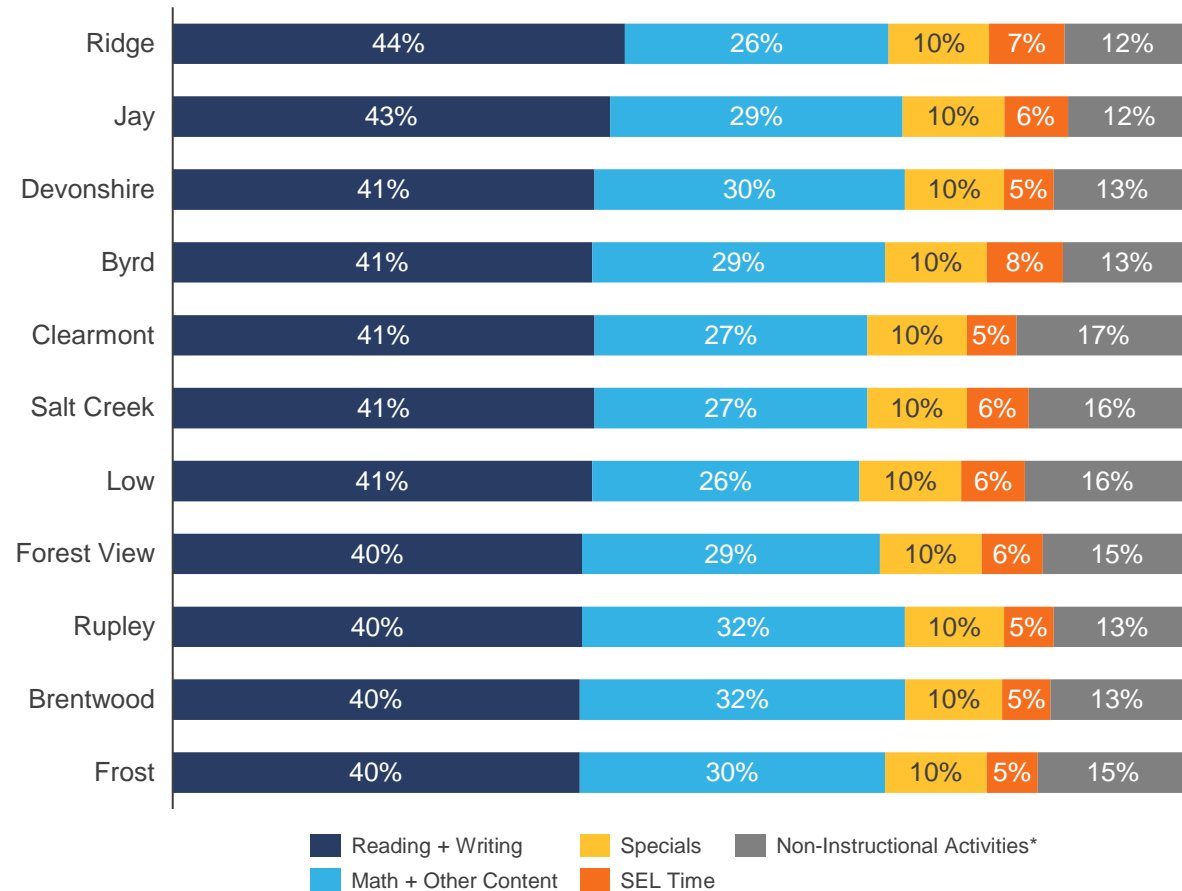
CCSD59 sets detailed guidelines for elementary schedules but there remains inconsistency across schools.



ELEMENTARY



CCSD59 3rd Grade Schedule Breakdown by Topic (2018-19)



A difference of **15 minutes** per school day amounts to **45 fewer hours** reading instruction during the school year

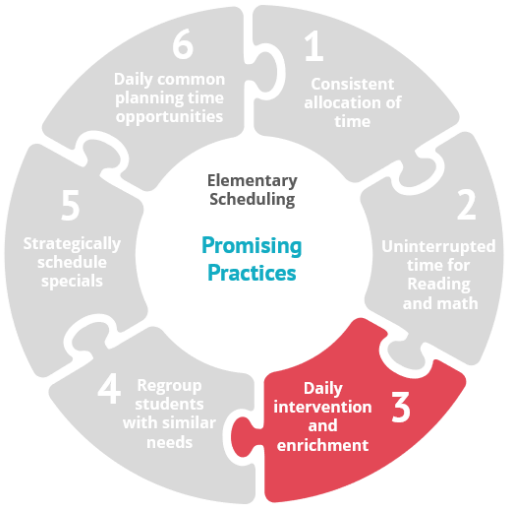
Source: District Data & DMGroup Analysis

* Non-instructional activities include lunch, recess, transitions, announcements, etc.
Total Minutes: 410

Promising practice is to include at least 30 minutes of daily intervention/ enrichment in the schedule to provide supports to students outside of core instructional blocks.



ELEMENTARY



CCSD59 Elementary Instructional Guidelines

K-2

Opening Circle	10
Reading Wkshp	40
Writing Wkshp	40
Phonemic Awareness/ Phonics	40
Small Group Instruction	45
Content (Sci/SS)	30
Specials	40
Math Tier 1 (NC/IM)	80
Closing Circle/Pack Up	15
Transitions/Brain Breaks	20
Total	360

3-5

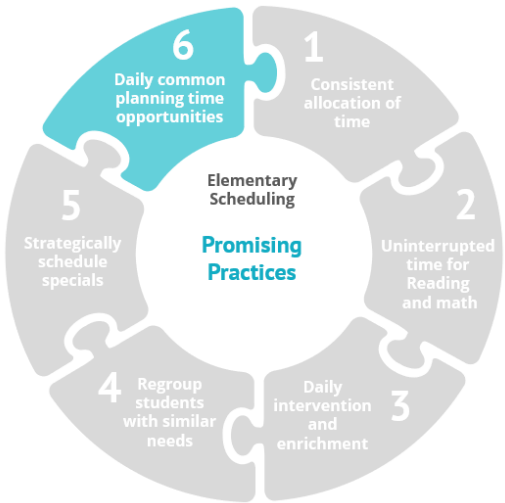
Opening Circle	10
Reading Wkshp	45
Writing Wkshp	45
Small Group Instruction	60
Content (Sci/SS)	35
Specials	40
Math Tier 1	60
Math WIN	30
Closing Circle/Pack Up	15
Transitions/Brain Breaks	20
Total	360

CCSD59 provides guidance for intervention support only in the upper elementary grades

Common planning time can facilitate professional learning and collaboration among teachers.



ELEMENTARY



Potential Benefits of Common Planning Time

- Facilitates **collaborative lesson planning**
- Allows teachers to **discuss formative assessments** and group students according to need
- Embeds the **use of data** to drive instruction into the district
- Provides opportunity for teachers to **learn from veteran and talented colleagues**



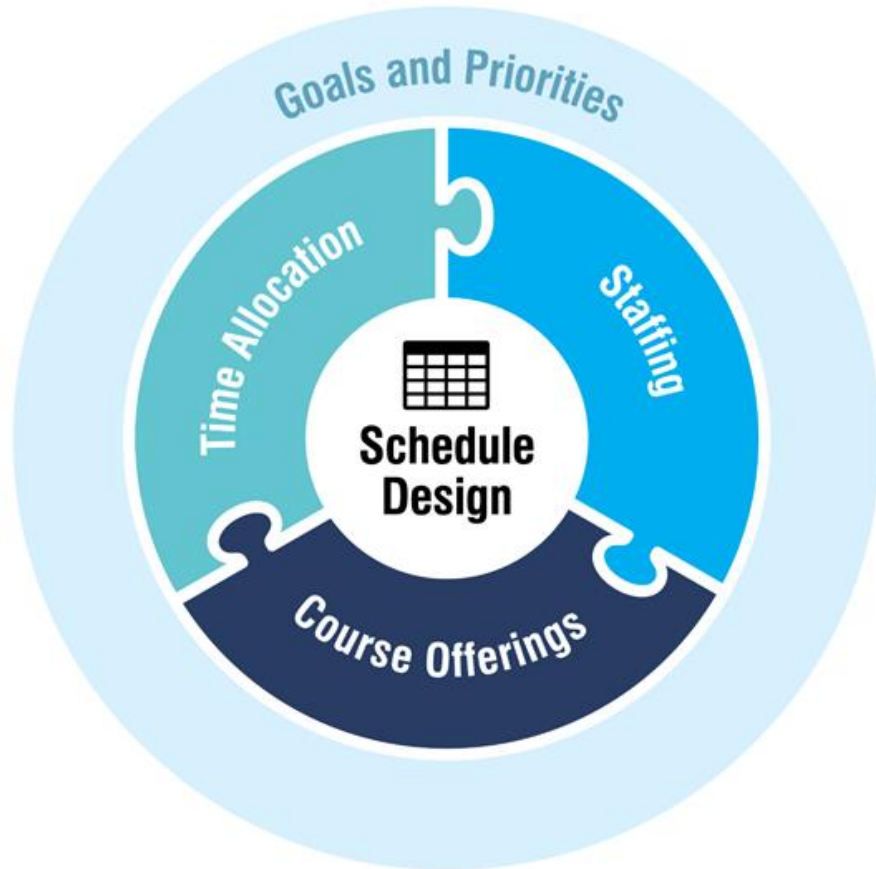
Focus Group/Interview Trends

- There are **no district-wide PLC expectations**; focus on collaboration among teachers varies based on the priorities of school leaders
- **Elementary teachers are protective of their planning time** and do not want to use that time to collaborate with colleagues
- **Collaboration between general education and special education teachers is limited** because they do not have the same planning time.

Source: DMGroup Analysis



Promising practice at the Junior high level includes setting priorities and district wide expectations for time allocation, staffing, and courses before developing a schedule.



Focus Group/Interview Trends



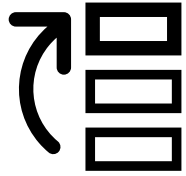
JUNIOR HIGH

- Junior high schedules prioritize the courses that are most limiting – special education, EL programming, elective classes with one section, etc.
- Junior High schedules are created to meet the needs of staffing availability and teacher contracts; students are slotted into courses only after the schedule has been finalized.
- District guidance for Junior High scheduling is less clear than at the elementary level; junior high staff expressed that there were either limited guidelines or too many expectations to reasonably incorporate

Source: DMGroup Analysis; CCSD59 Interview/Focus Groups (2021)



Recommendations



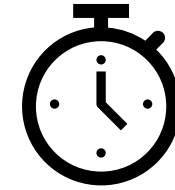
Set District-Wide Priorities

- Determine the goals and priorities that school leaders can use to guide decision-making on tradeoffs.
- Clearly articulate the priorities and model how to make decisions.



Provide Professional Learning

- Strengthen the process and roles for developing schedules.
- Identify learning needs through dialogue with school leaders and provide supports.



Strengthen Accountability and Support Mechanisms

- Identify how to measure whether students across the district are receiving equitable access to learning opportunities.
- Collaborate with school leaders for ongoing scheduling support.

Based on the Opportunity Review Process, DMGroup identified the following 4 findings.

Findings

- 1 The effort to equally distribute dual language **programming** to all schools, has led to inequitable opportunities for students and staff.
- 2 Until recently, school leaders developed schedules as operational, rather than strategic, tools; schedules prioritized key constraints like special education schedules, union policies, and state guidelines.
- 3 Efforts to increase inclusion of **Students with Disabilities** in general education settings are complicated by the culture and systems that limit staff collaboration.
- 4 Most district and school-based **communications** are one-way, limiting opportunities for genuine collaboration with families.

Findings

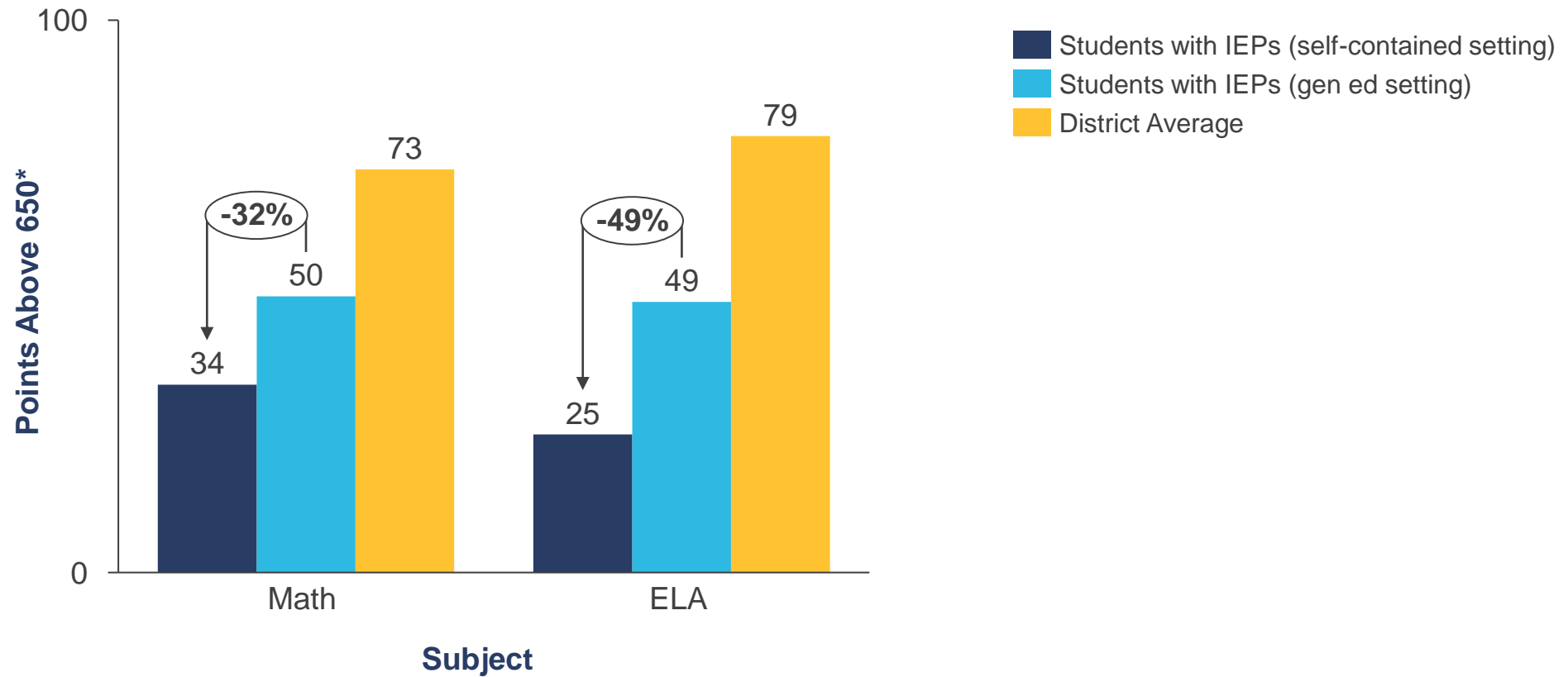
- 3 Efforts to increase inclusion of **Students with Disabilities** in general education settings are complicated by the culture and systems that limit staff collaboration.
 - a The culture of division between special and general education is fueled by a lack of knowledge and a fear of failure.
 - b The siloed culture is reinforced by structures that discourage collaboration.

Students with disabilities in self-contained classes consistently have lower scores on standardized assessments than students with disabilities in general education settings.



CULTURE

Achievement of Students with IEPs compared to the District Average on the 2019 IAR, by Educational Setting



* The IAR exam is scored on a scale of 650-850. The raw scores were converted to demonstrate relative difference between student subgroups.
Source: CCSD59 District Data (SY18-19)

Families of children in self-contained settings and special education staff articulate the benefits of inclusion for all students.

Focus Group Trends *among Families of Students with Disabilities*



- Families who had experience with their children in general education settings found that their children were **more social and more academically motivated** in those settings.
- When appropriate, inclusion in general education settings would **provide their children with the challenge that all students need for growth.**
- In addition to benefiting their children, inclusion would benefit general education children by teaching them **how to engage with differences among peers.**

Focus Group/Interview Trends *among Special Education staff*



CULTURE

- Inclusion would **build the skills of general education students** to interact with their disabled peers.
- Inclusion would help to **strengthen a growth mindset culture** and help staff develop greater comfort with and understanding of a wider range of student needs.
- The **current self-contained programs are so isolated** that sometimes kids can get “stuck” in them; they lose opportunities to be part of their home school community and access to dual language programming.

Source: CCSD59 Interview/Focus Groups (2021)

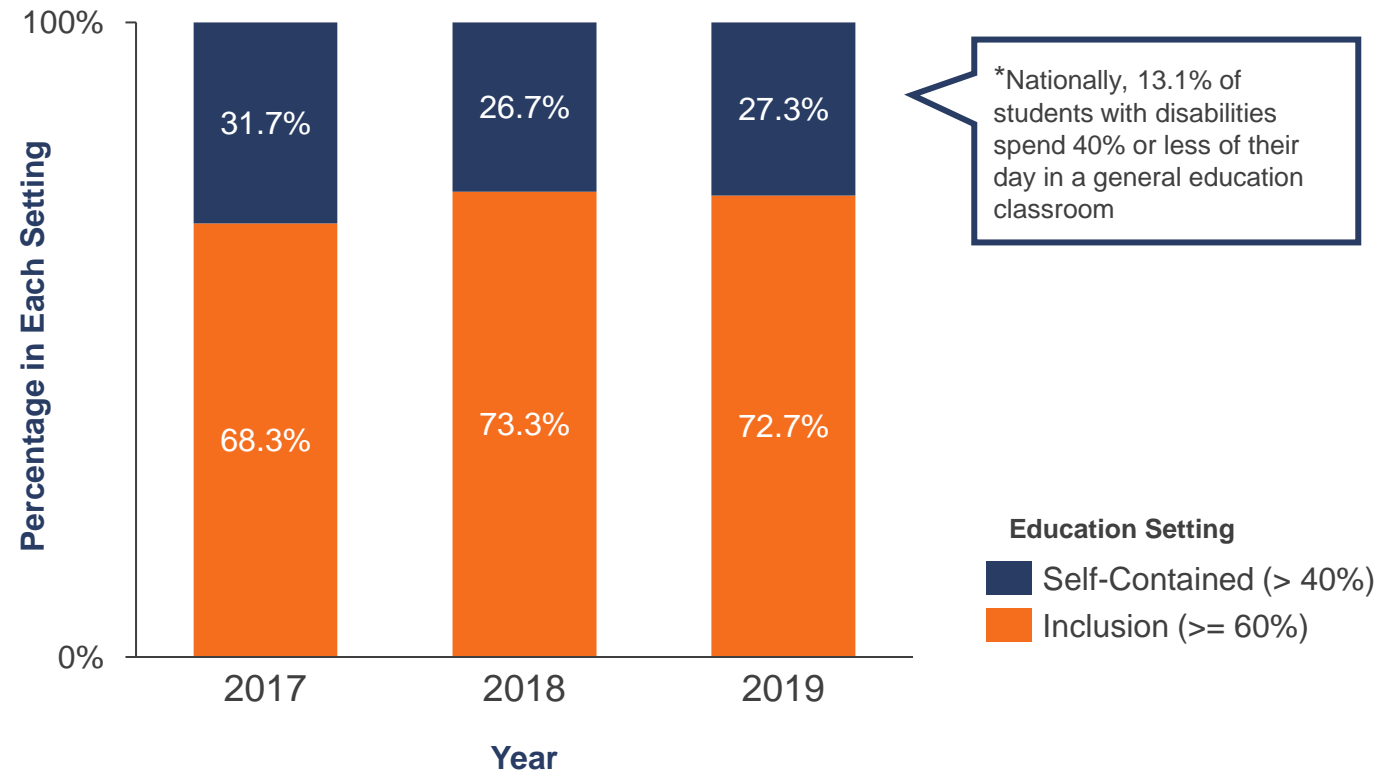
There has already been an effective move to increase inclusion opportunities for students in self-contained settings.



Focus Group/Interview Trends

- An internal audit of IEPs showed that some students were being contained in self-contained classes all day even if they only had a disability in one academic area
- Increasing inclusion opportunities for students is a goal of the educational services department; there has been a concerted effort to include students with IEPs in general education settings, where appropriate
- There has been a targeted effort within self-contained programs to include more students with disabilities in general education science courses.
- The district has added the role of inclusion facilitators to help general education teachers meet the needs of students with disabilities in their classrooms

Percentage of Students with IEPs in Self-Contained Settings*



CULTURE

* self-contained setting include students with IEPs educated in separate educational facilities (often out of district) and students with IEPs who spend less than 40% of their day in a general education classroom.
Source: IL Report Card (2017-2019) CCSD59 Interview/Focus Groups (2021), NCES Fast Facts "Students with Disabilities, Inclusion of" <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=59>

Families, teachers, and staff, however, continue to feel a strong divide between special and general education fueled by a lack of knowledge, misunderstanding, and a fear of failure.



Focus Group/Interview Trends



STRUCTURES

- Families of students in self-contained programs do not feel part of the school community; many of the communications they receive and the programming at the school does not apply to their children
- Self-contained Special Education teachers do not feel accepted in the broader school community
- According to special educators, general education teachers lack a deep understanding of their role in supporting students who are struggling; general education teachers are anxious to get students into tier 2 support so that special education teachers can “fix” those students
- Staff are still building skills around problem solving; there has been a culture of leaders telling teachers what to do and teachers are paralyzed by the potential of making mistakes.
- There is a district-wide goal to strengthen differentiation skills among general education teachers

Source: CCSD59 Interview/Focus Groups (2021)



The culture of silos is reinforced by structures that limit collaboration and understanding between special education and general education staff.

1

Separating Instruction and Special Education

- There is common understanding that principals are the instructional leaders in the school building while APs oversee special education. This norm reinforces the **message that special education teachers are not doing instruction**
- There have been times that **special educators are overlooked for leadership opportunities**, in part due to this distinction between instruction and special education

2

Planning Time

- General education and special education teachers have **planning periods at different times of the day**, which makes it challenging to collaborate on how to best serve students and limits the opportunities to better understand each other's roles in providing supports to students

3

Trainings

- Educational services staff and general education teachers are **not often included in the same trainings**. There are some trainings on topics like behavior and problem solving that all staff would benefit from but are only available to educational services staff

a

CULTURE

Source: CCSD59 Interview/Focus Groups (2021)



Recommendations



Build in Structures to Encourage Collaboration

- Schedule common planning time between special education and general education staff.
- Model collaboration at the leadership level and articulate its value for students.



Clarify Roles, Responsibilities, and Expectations

- Document roles and responsibilities in support for students with input from staff.
- Ensure that schedules and structures set staff up for success.



Foster a Culture of Risk-Taking

- Model risk-taking at the school level.
- Create intentional, structured opportunities for staff to problem solve and experiment together.
- Reward creativity and risk-taking, even when it fails to produce the desired outcomes.

Based on the Opportunity Review Process, DMGroup identified the following 4 findings.

Findings

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- 3 Efforts to increase inclusion of **Students with Disabilities** in general education settings are complicated by the culture and systems that discourage staff collaboration.
- 4 Most district and school-based **communications** are one-way, limiting opportunities for genuine collaboration with families.

What is the difference between one-way and two-way communication?

One-Way Communication



Typical approach to family engagement

- **Definition:** information flows one way – often from the school/district to the family
- **Purpose:** to have families accommodate the agenda and expectations of the educator
- **Challenge:** Positions the information giver as the expert and often replicates existing power dynamics
- **Examples:** PTA meetings, parent-teacher conferences, open houses, mass communications, etc.

Two-Way Communication



Looks to develop families as true partners in student success

- **Definition:** information flows two ways – educators and families recognize that each holds information that can support the child's success
- **Purpose:** to foster effective collaboration and input to strengthen the student's experience in school
- **Value:** Genuine partnerships lead to students earning higher grades, increased attendance, better social skill development, and increased likelihood of graduating (*Henderson & Mapp*)
- **Examples:** Participation on decision-making committees, proactive solicitation of feedback, parent-teacher conferences, open houses, etc.

Henderson and Mapp, 2002, <https://education.uw.edu/sites/default/files/programs/epsc/ParentCurriculum-FINAL-Print.pdf>

According to focus group/interview trends, formal communication structures tend to be one-way and inconsistently accessible to all community members.



District- wide communication via website, calls, email

- The district does a good job of translating written communications (emails, website, etc.) into Spanish, English, and Polish
- The district is not as consistent in providing communication in the less common languages



Apps for individual student feedback

- There are several apps that are used to provide daily information about students, especially students with disabilities
- Many of the apps are one-way – they do not easily enable parents to respond to updates; families wanting to respond need to reach out via email



School-based response to family outreach

- When families reach out, school staff are very responsive
- Some families – especially Spanish speaking families – don't always feel comfortable reaching out. Sometimes this is due to cultural differences; sometimes they are deterred because no one supporting their child speaks their language



Community Outreach Specialist

- The community outreach specialists are not empowered with decision making authority so while helpful, their role is limited
- Families express concerns to the outreach specialists that they are not willing to communicate to administrators
- Families that are aware of their rights and options and are willing to speak out get treated differently; loud voices are heard



Structured, proactive feedback

- Families expressed interest in a structured survey to give feedback
- Much of the current feedback and engagement is around one-off situations but families would like to give systems level, less immediate feedback and don't feel like they have an opportunity to do that

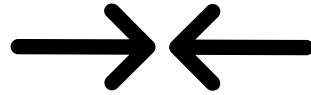
Source: CCSD59 Interview/Focus Groups (2021)

Recommendations



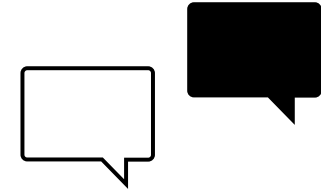
Redefine the Role of Families

- Define the role of families in key district and school decisions.
- Develop structures to ensure that collaboration is proactive and authentic at the district, school, and classroom level.



Develop Structures for Two-Way Communication

- Consider a routine way of having families provide input and feedback on both student progress and district/school decisions.
- Reflect on staff feedback mechanisms and consider if there are ways to strengthen collaboration among families and staff and among leaders and staff.



Increase the Accessibility of Information

- Invest in making critical district information broadly available to families in multiple modes.
- Strengthen learning and efforts to make all communications accessible to families across languages and cultures.

1	Introduction and Project Goals
2	DMEquityOffice Overview
3	Opportunity Review Methodology
4	Findings and Recommendations
5	Next Steps

To ensure sustainability, the district has selected to place immediate focus on focus the first two findings.

Findings

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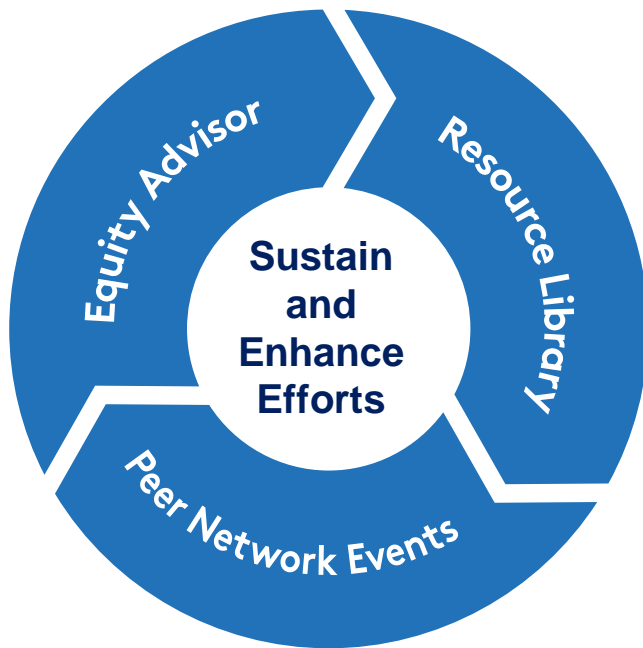
CCSD59 will use DMGroup's Change Management Framework to plan and implement equity efforts.



Adapted from the "8-Step Process for Accelerating Change" by Dr. John Kotter, Center for Creative Leadership, Harvard Business Review, McKinsey and Company, "Change Monster" by Jeanie Duck, Lewin's 3-Stage Model of Change

CCSD59 will be supported in planning and implementation through the resource of the DMEquityOffice that build knowledge and capacity of district leadership and staff.

Annual Partnership



Equity Advisor serves as a go-to resource to help district leaders navigate sustained change through thought partnership and connection to resources

District leaders and staff have exclusive access to a cultivated **resource library** to build district knowledge and offer resources for action.

DMGroup provides space for district leaders to engage in a **professional learning community** to validate planning and harness the perspectives and insights of peers doing similar equity work.