



Howard County Public School System

Improving Outcomes for Students With and Without Disabilities

JAN. 22, 2015

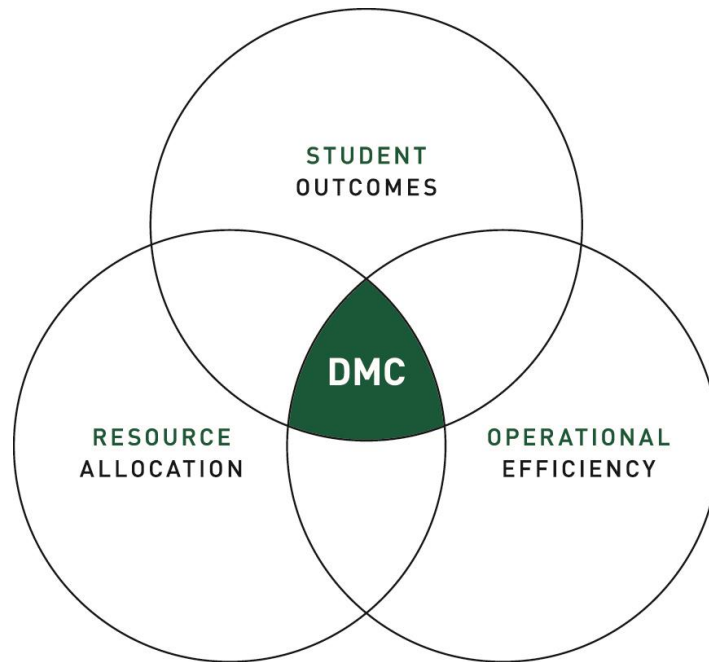


DISTRICT
MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL

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

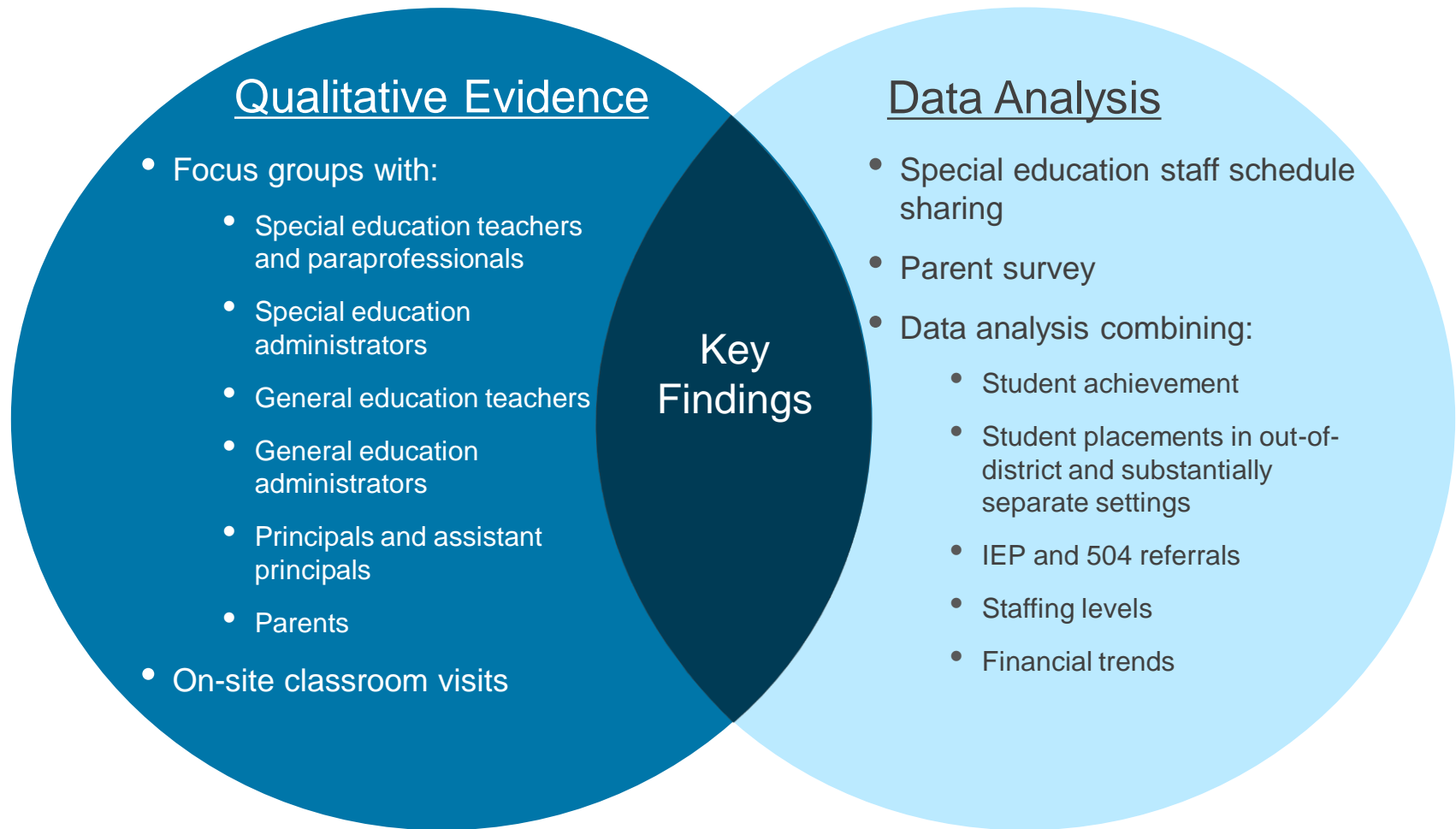
1 To gain a deep understanding of the current status of services for struggling students with and without an IEP.

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.

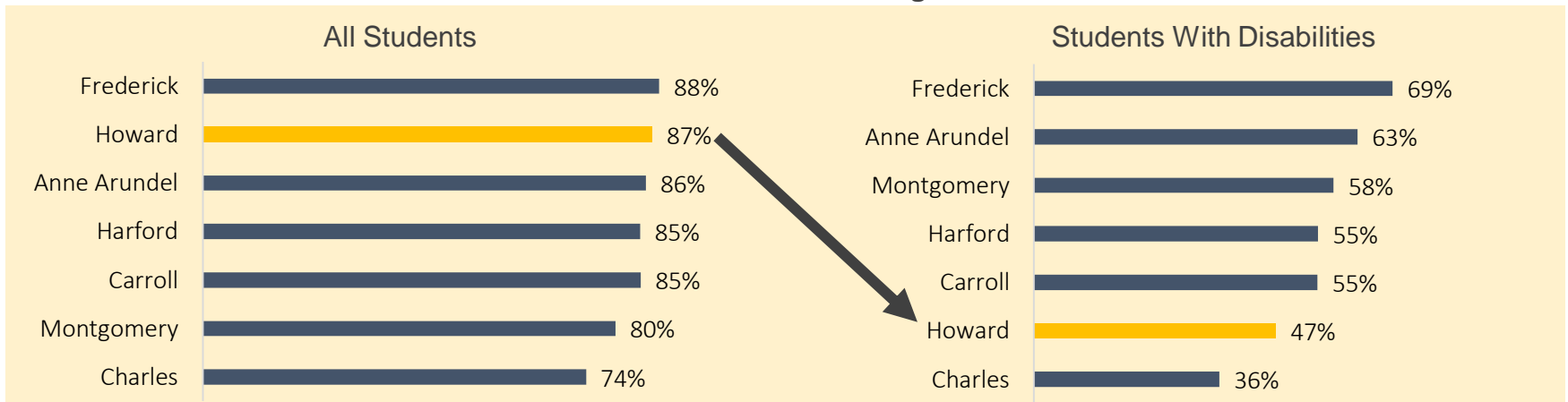
Commendations

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.

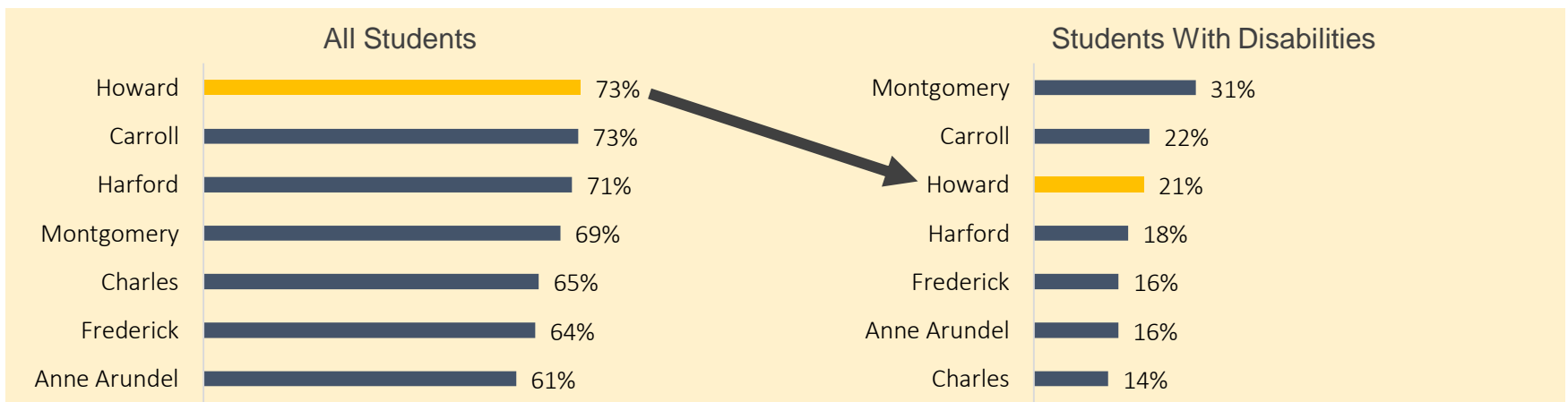
Students with disabilities in the district do not achieve at the same levels as in like communities.

2013-14 MSA Scores

Third Grade Reading

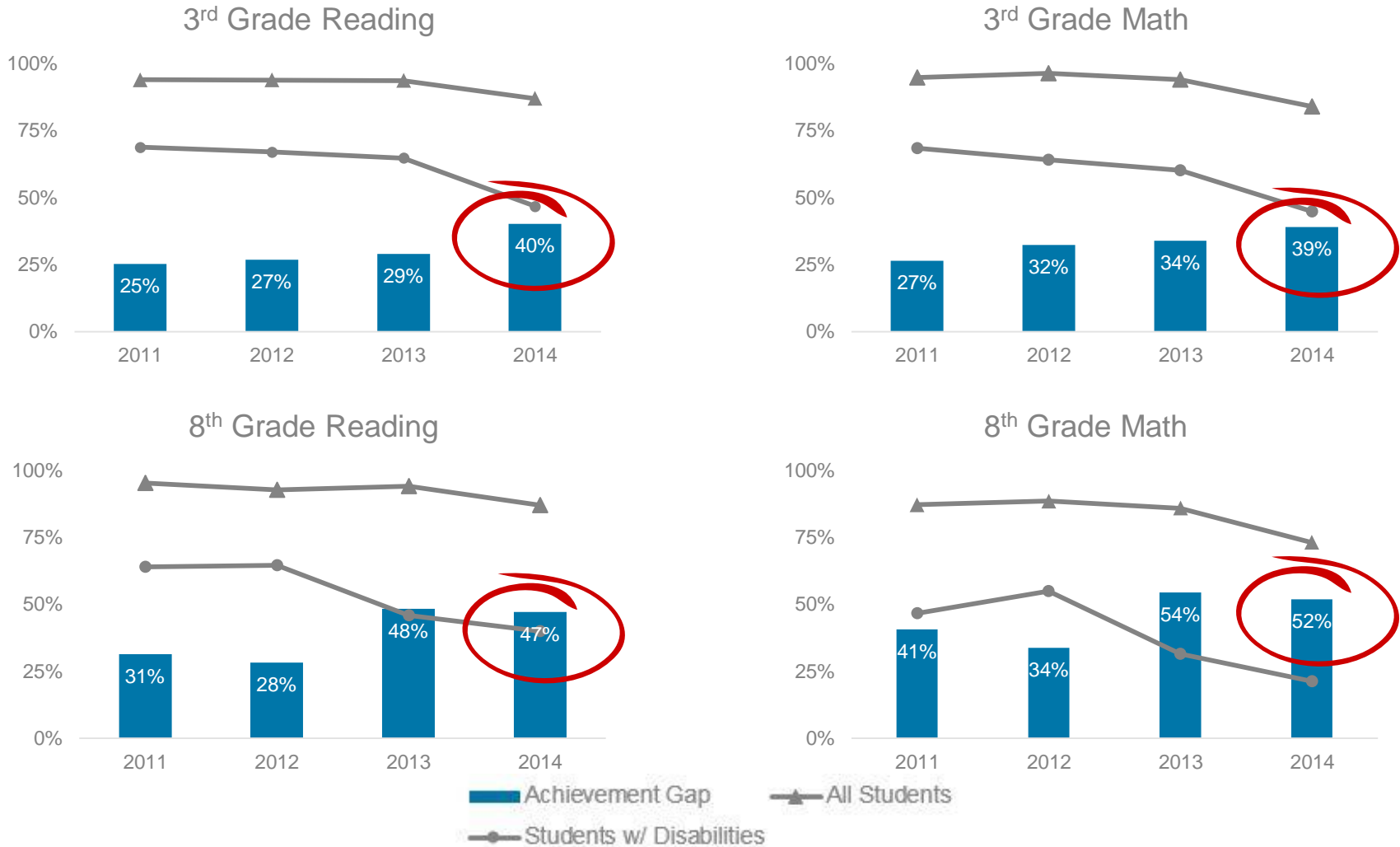


Eighth Grade Math



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.

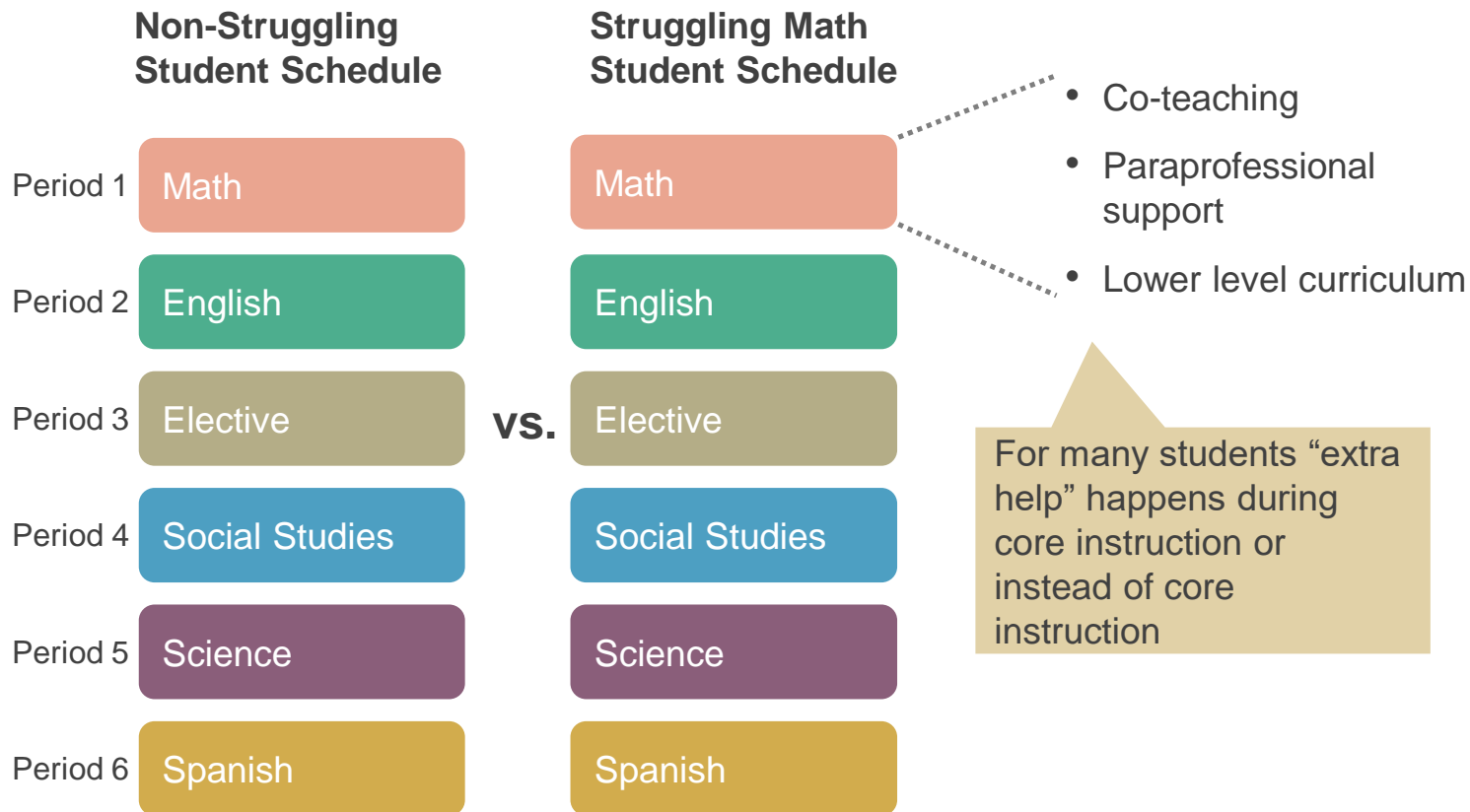
Opportunities

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

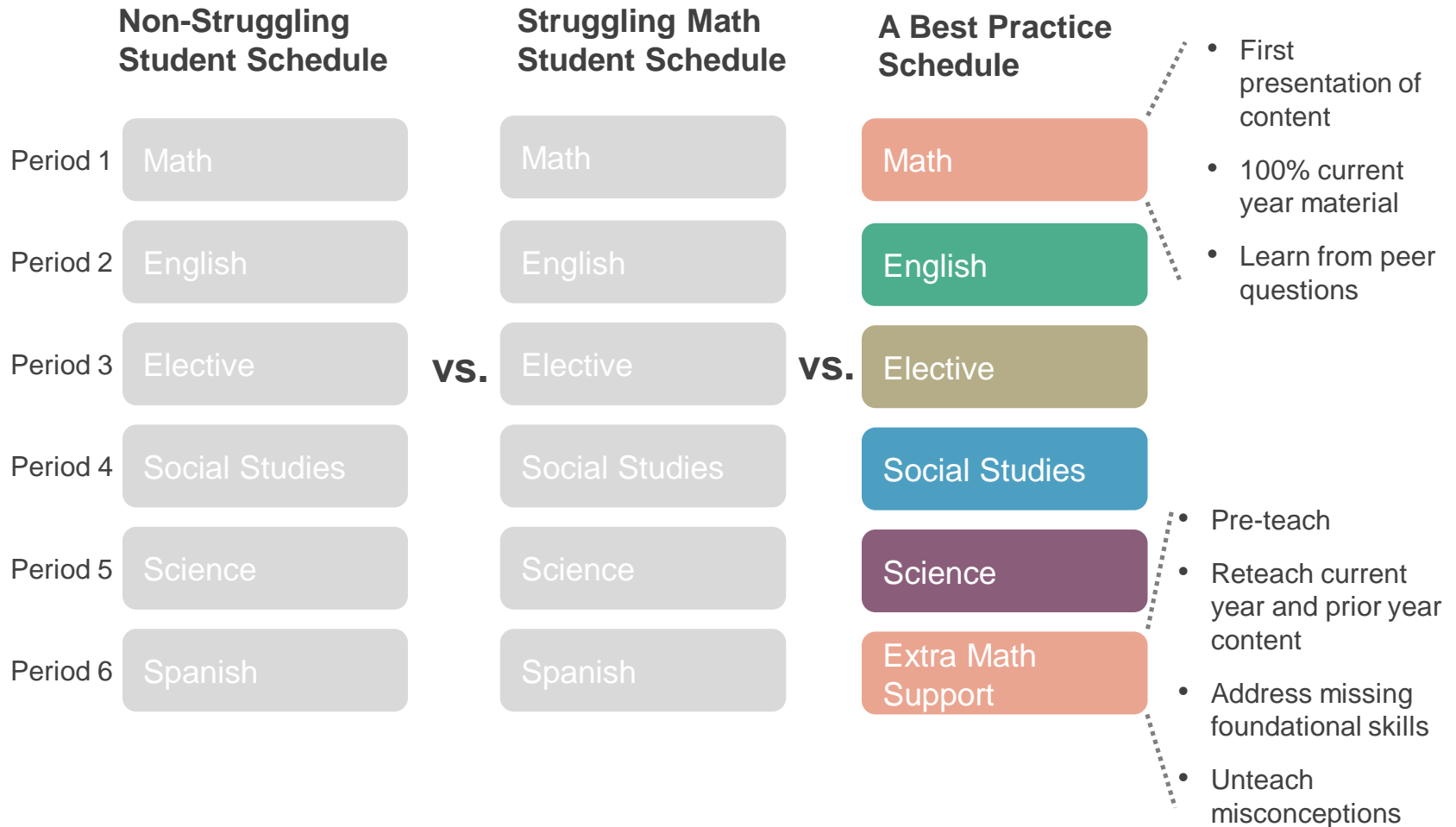
1: EXTRA TIME



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

Math

- In general education classroom
- With general education teacher
- General education curriculum

English

Elective

Social Studies

Science

Extra Math Support

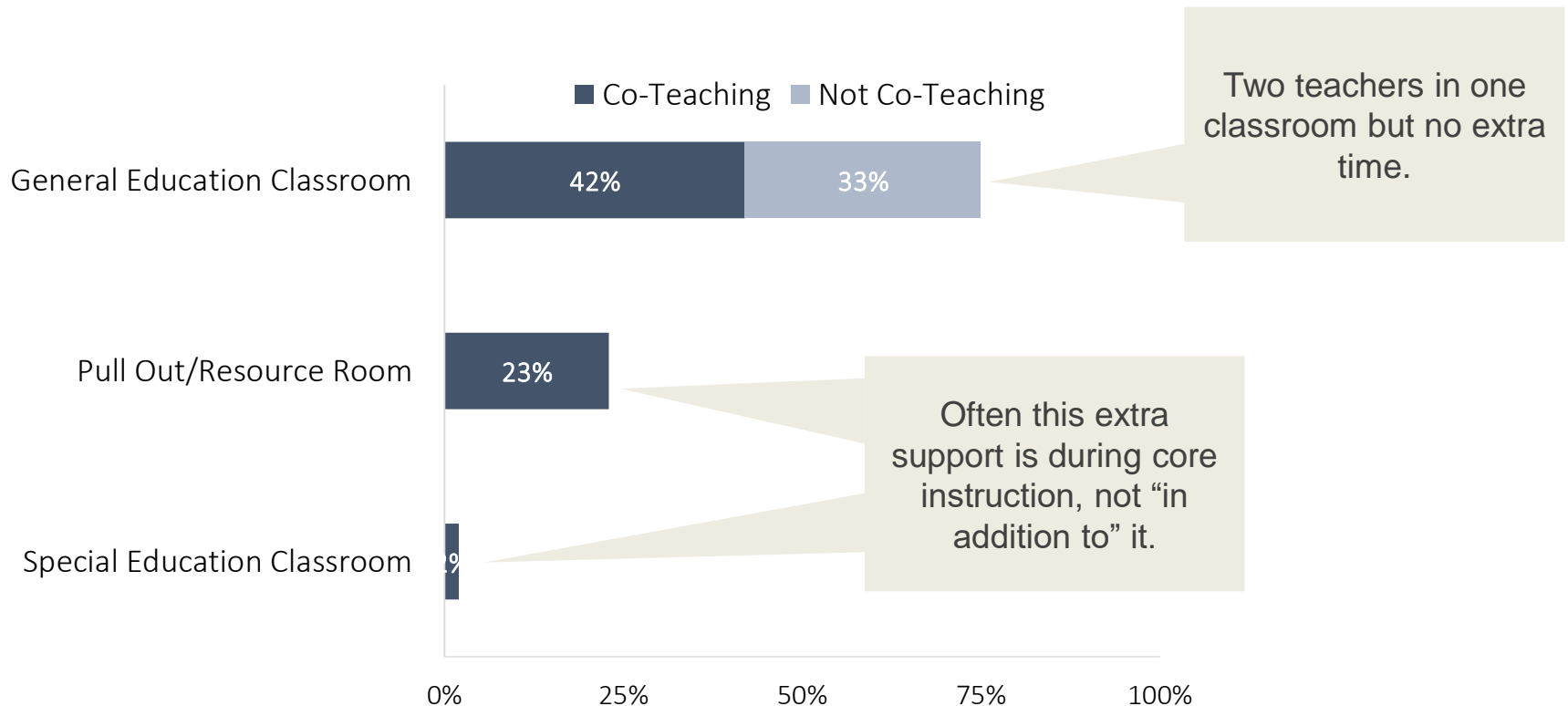
- In general education classroom
- With general education teacher or dual certified teacher
- Focuses on mastering grade level skills

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

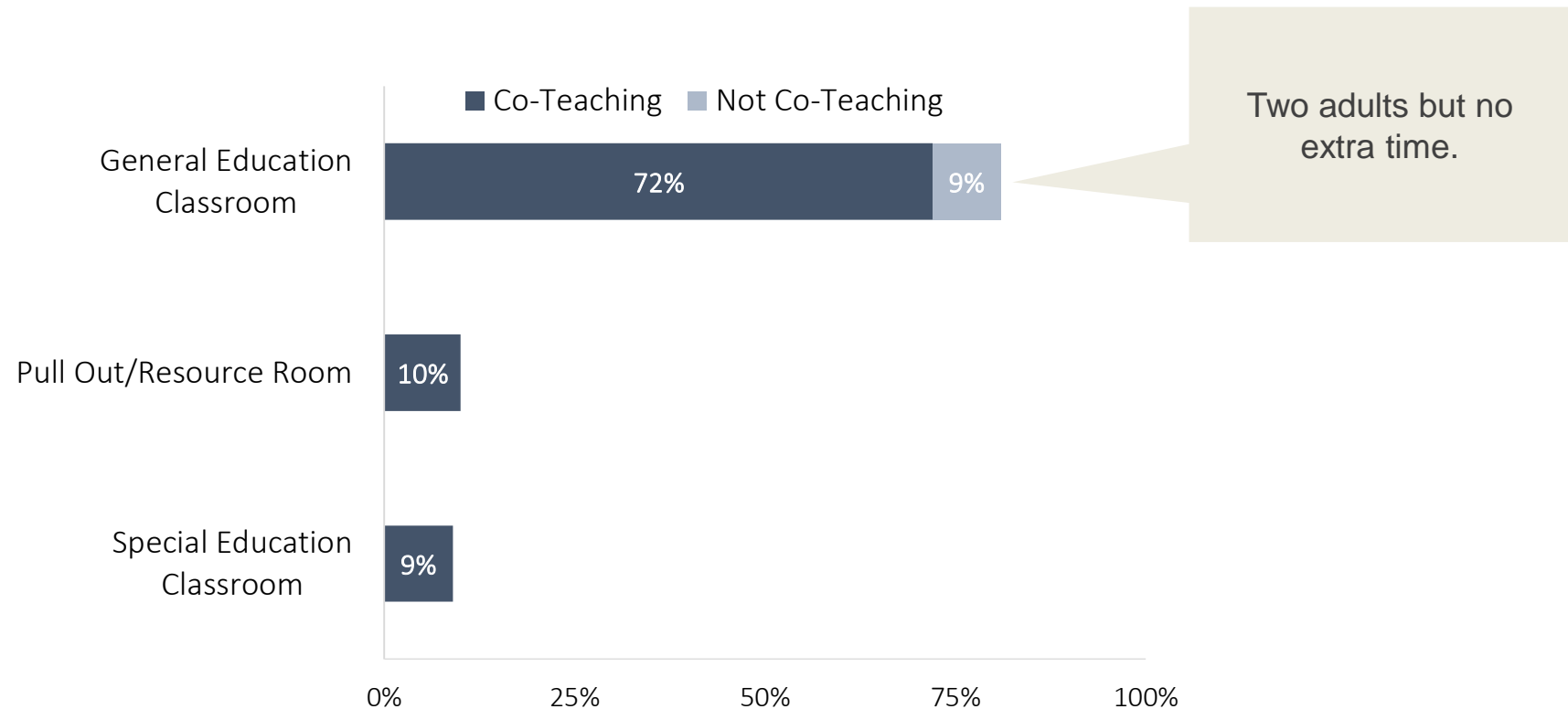


At the secondary level, “collaboration” is the most common form of special education support, which does not provide extra time.

Instructional Setting, Inclusion Special Education Teachers

1: EXTRA TIME

Secondary Level



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

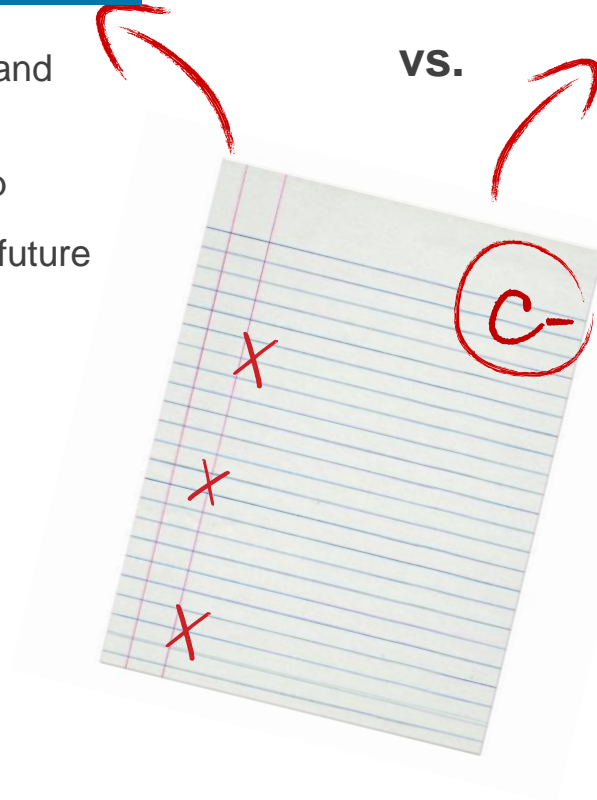
Generalist Support

- 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



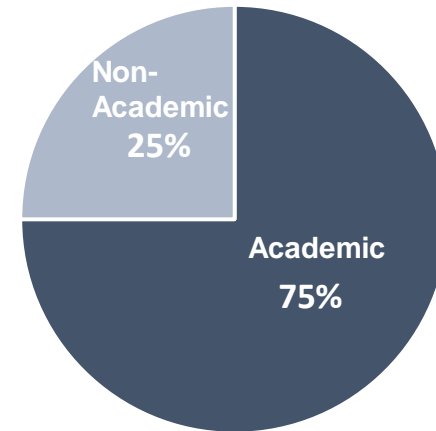
At the elementary level, some students receive extra help from content strong staff, but others do not.

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%

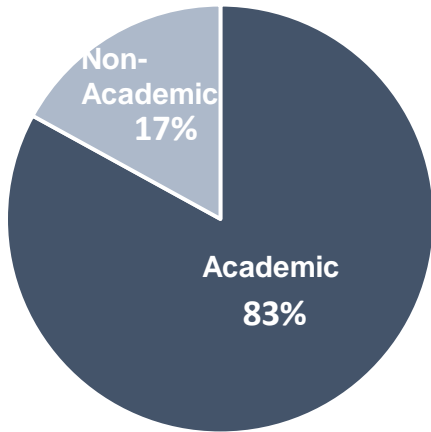
No general education paraprofessionals were included in this study.

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

Topic of Support, Secondary Level

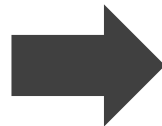
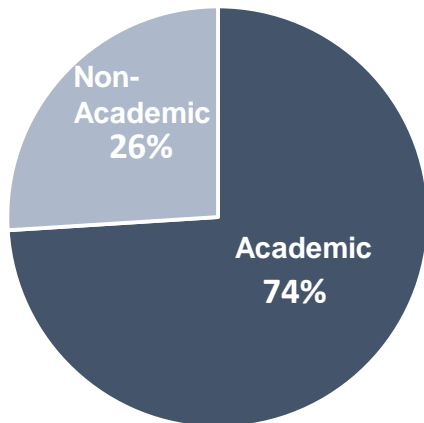
2: CONTENT STRONG

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%

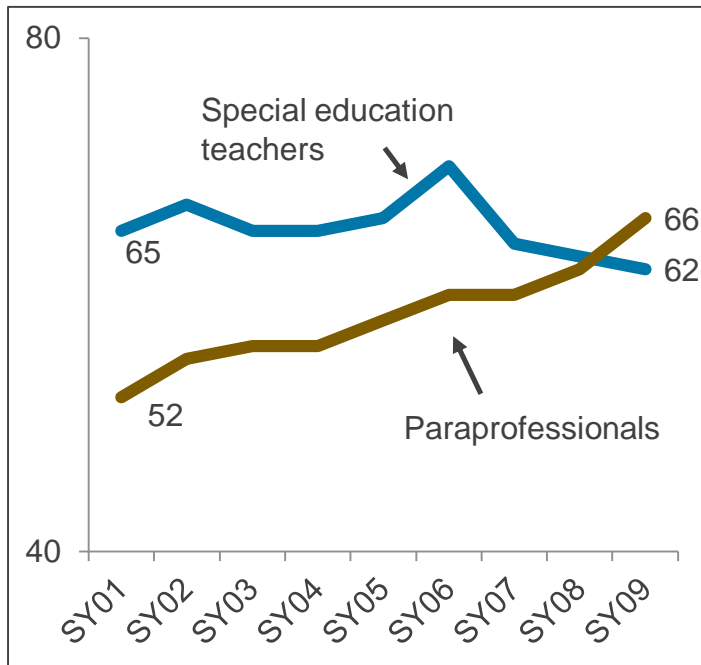
No general education paraprofessionals were included in this study.

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

National Special Education Context

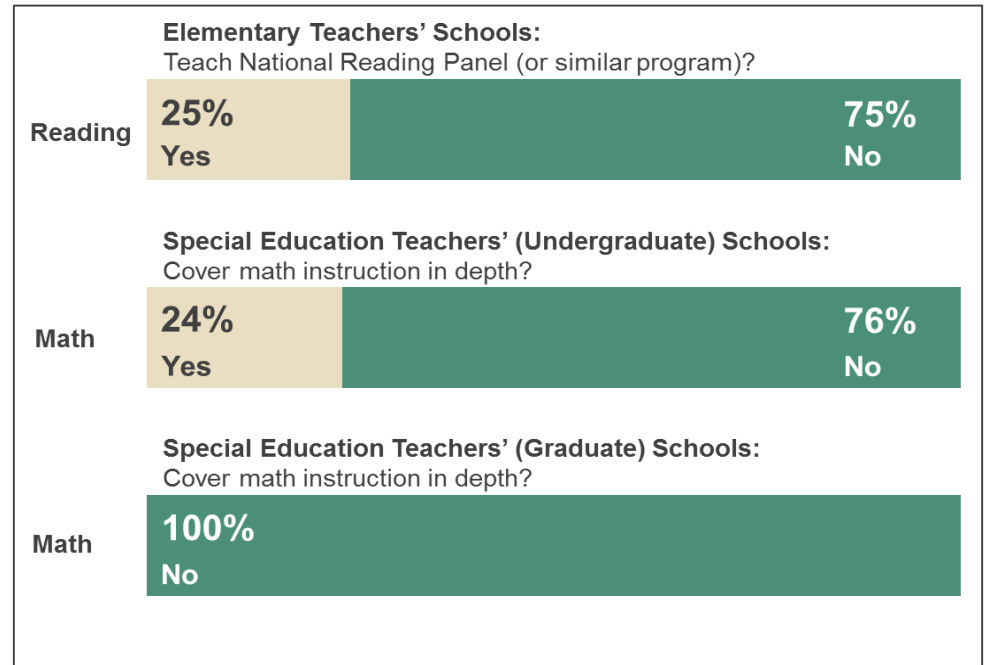
2: CONTENT STRONG

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

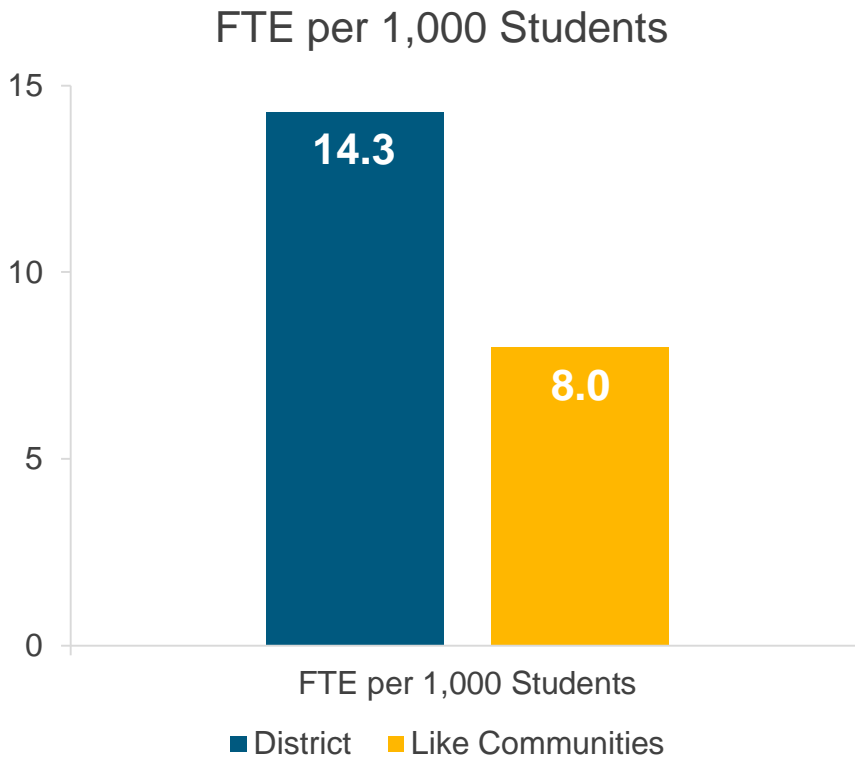


Source: National Council on Teacher Quality, "Teacher Prep Ratings," 2013.

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 1.6x 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

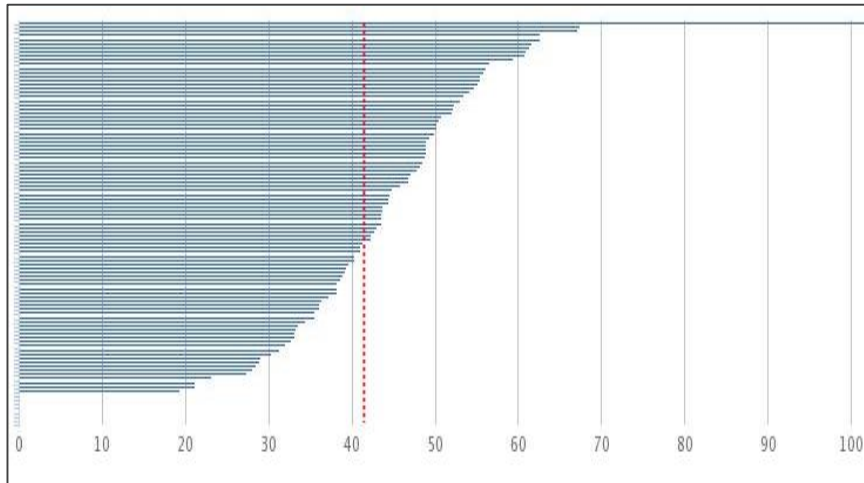
Consider increasing the amount of time related service providers spend with students, while managing group size through thoughtful scheduling.

Speech and Language Therapists, Activity Data

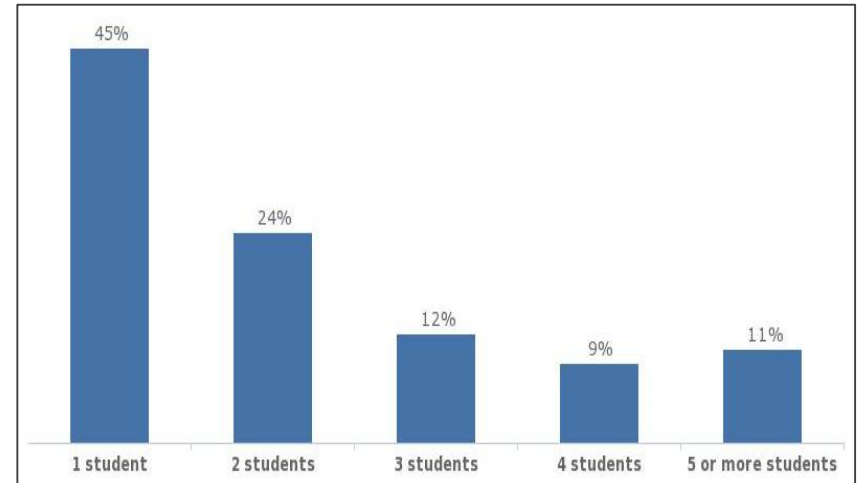
4: RELATED SERVICES

% of Time Spent with Students

Avg: 41%



Group Size



- HCPSS relies on SLPs at a rate 1.5x that of similar districts
- Increasing the time SLPs and other related service providers spend serving students to 75% could free up resources to invest in highly skilled reading and math specialists
- Similar patterns were found for OTs and PTs

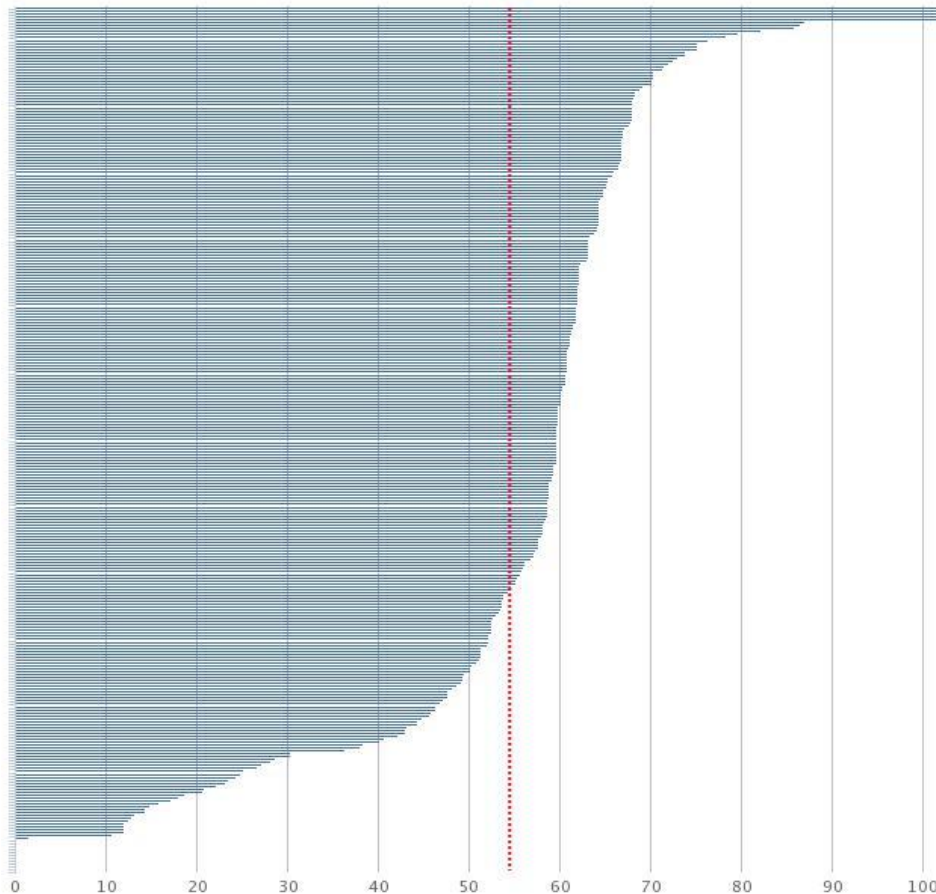
Consider expanding the roles of school- and central office-based administrators to manage how special education staff use their time.

Special Education Inclusion Teachers

5: MANAGING STAFF TIME

% of Time Spent with Students

Avg: 54%



- There is considerable inequity in how special education staff use their time
- Students could benefit from more instructional time with teachers

Q + A



If you have any comments or questions about the contents of this document, please contact The District Management Council:

- **Tel:** (877) DMC-3500
- **Email:** nlevenson@dmcouncil.org
- **Fax:** (617) 491-5266
- **Web:** dmcouncil.org
- **Mail:** 70 Franklin Street, Boston, MA 02110