

# SPECIAL EDUCATION ED WORKGROUP COMMITTEE REPORT

September 28, 2018

## I. CHARGE

The purpose of this committee is to develop recommendations that will inform the expansion of programs/classrooms for students with emotional disabilities and related disabilities at the elementary level. The priority focus of the committee's work must address the need for an elementary level program that addresses all areas (e.g., academic, social/emotional, behavior, communication) of need for our students and integrates therapeutic approaches/environments as well.

Recommendations must be based on multiple data points and aligned with strategies included in the DSE strategic plan. Evidence-based practices and interventions aligned with current research and existing models at the secondary level must be considered. The committee is encouraged to review program models in other school systems to support their charge. Maintaining a balance in increasing program options for this student population while also promoting inclusive opportunities for all students according to their IEPs is expected.

## II. MEMBERS

The committee was comprised of parents, special educators, general educators, school based administrators, and Department of Special Education staff. 24 individuals were invited to participate in this workgroup with people committing to attend and 24 people participating in the meetings.

### School Based Staff

Trish Armour  
Ronald Bianchi  
Sayard Meyenberg  
Kavita Patel  
Laura Peter\*

### Central Office Staff

Brandon Garry  
Melissa Magee  
Sonya Robinson  
Vickie Walker  
Jessica Yaniro\*  
Janice Yetter

### Parents

Linda Leslie  
Cameron McNary\*

Chairperson \*

### **III. MEETING DATES/AGENDA ITEMS**

#### **July 25, 2018**

- Review our committee charge
- Examine the current HCPSS regional enrollment
- Discuss current HCPSS programming for students with emotional disabilities

#### **August 15, 2018**

- Review our committee charge
- Examine the current research
- Review the data collected

#### **August 21, 2018**

- Review our committee charge
- Develop committee recommendations
- Align each recommendation with the Department of Special Education Strategic Plan

#### **September 12, 2018**

- Develop guiding principles to our recommendations
- Identify recommendations to present to Executive Director of Special Education
- Align recommendations with the Department of Special Education Strategic Plan
- Review our committee charge

#### **September 26th, 2018**

- Review committee recommendations
- Align recommendations with the Department of Special Education Strategic Plan

### **IV. PROCESS**

Stakeholders for students with disabilities birth to twenty-one were invited to participate in the Special Education Emotional Disability Workgroup Committee. Committee members consisted of parents, special education teachers, mental health therapist, school administrators, and Department of Special Education Instructional Facilitators, Resource Teachers and Behavior Specialists. Meetings were held in person at a variety of times and accessible remotely (via zoom) to accommodate all stakeholders.

Committee members collaborated as a whole group and in small groups during to research programming, and examine local, state, and national data related to mental health and programming for students with mental health needs. Given the expedited time frame the committee developed a list of recommendations for further consideration.

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

### Low Cost/Medium-High Return

Recommended Area	Recommendation Summary
Transportation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide training to bus drivers on how to support students with emotional disabilities. Leverage existing training (2018-2019 SY)</li> </ol>
Activities/Outreach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish rotating school-based family night events in Regional Programs (e.g FIT). Include events to build community among families, parent information sessions on appropriate topics. Provide food to encourage participation. Address daycare and transportation issues as needed.</li> <li>2. Using resources and PL below, educate parents on wrap around services and facilitate their access to utilizing the outside resources (home therapy, psych services, etc.)</li> </ol>
Resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create comprehensive database/guide of community resources to arm staff with knowledge to support families</li> <li>2. Create a list of Safety Care trained subs who are open to working in Regional Programs</li> </ol>
Staffing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hire and assign two full-time Safety Care trained floating subs to Regional Programs who could:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Sub for staff who are out, or</li> <li>b. Help with programs that are at or above capacity</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. In planning for the 2019/2020 school year, ensure that K-5 self-contained related arts classes are available in Regional Program schools. Monitor school enrollment to ensure .2 staffing support remains available for the full school year</li> </ol>
Professional Learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Educate on culturally responsive teaching practices (Cultural Proficiency 1 training)</li> <li>2. Apply cultural proficiency lens to screening and identification of students with social/emotional concerns</li> <li>3. Provide professional learning on county-wide resources to PPWs</li> <li>4. Provide Regional staff with general awareness on community resources available to families</li> <li>5. Send Regional staff to observe best practices at Bridges and non-public settings</li> <li>6. Train and implement Restorative Justice for all schools to implement to build positive school culture</li> </ol>

### Medium Cost/High Return

Recommended Area	Recommendation Summary
Staffing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Add 2 social workers to support all ED Regional programs</li><li>2. Add staff for existing programs at both the elementary and middle school levels<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ 6 teachers, 6 paraeducators, 4 student assistants, full-time PPWs</li></ul></li></ol>
Program Expansion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Add consultative psychiatric services for students in current ED Regional programs</li><li>2. Offer students in ED Regionals a variety of differentiated therapies:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Mindfulness, sensory integration, trauma based learning, etc.</li></ul></li></ol>
Program Restructuring	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Provide differentiated programs (locations) so students can access supports based on their individual needs<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Behavioral focused program</li><li>○ Mental Health/Therapeutic Focused program</li><li>○ Autism focused program</li></ul></li></ol>
Professional Learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Provide professional development for staff on social emotional learning<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Autism, trauma based learning, mindfulness, etc.</li></ul></li></ol>

## High Cost/High Return

Recommended Area	Recommendation Summary
Program Expansion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish a Bridges Program expansion to include elementary age students               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Staffing (teachers, para-educators, therapists, mental health techs, administration, PPW, related service providers)</li> <li>○ Building and Facilities</li> <li>○ Transportation</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
Program Location	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use Shared Campus and/or close proximity to elementary, middle and high schools for individualized access to peers and general ed setting</li> </ol>

### VI: Additional Considerations

Potential harmful effects of removing students from LRE at the elementary age

Desirability of moving toward more differentiated services.

The potential harmful effects of removing students from LRE, as well as the potential harmful effects of not removing a student from a LRE, into a separate building (i.e. Bridges program) were both considered as the committee developed the recommendations.

Related Arts:

- Self contained classes provided to students across all levels?
- ED Regionals at the elementary level no longer offering self-contained related arts to stay consistent with middle and high. Students who require this need may the supports outside the comprehensive setting.

Increased growth in students in the current ED Regional Programs

- What is the plan moving forward as the growth continues?
- Where do these students go?
- What is the cap for current ED Regional Programs?

### VII: DSE Strategic Plan Alignment

- Access, Equity, Progress Action Imperative:
  - Access to general education
  - Equity in education
- Social skills
  - Provide differentiated training for all staff, students and parents on social competencies across all levels and in a variety of settings and environments
  - Expand social skills programs and opportunities to students with special needs

- Training
  - Provide access to timely, meaningful, consistent, and ongoing professional learning to all paraprofessionals
- Case Management/Continuum
  - Conduct research to inform the expansion of continuum of services for students with autism and other disabilities and ensure consistency for program implementation