



Howard County Public School System Parent Questions DMC Responses

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“DMC Question” document

Questions flagged for DMC

1. In the Introduction (page 2) it states: "The research for this project included extensive in-person interviews, and online parent survey, a deep look at hard data, classroom visits, benchmarking against best practices and like communities, and other research."

a. Regarding the "extensive in-person interviews":

i. Who was interviewed (e.g., parents, teachers, paraeducators, anyone else)?

The following roles were interviewed in the fall of 2014, typically with approximately 6-10 representatives in each focus group:

- **Elementary special education teachers**
- **Secondary special education teachers**
- **Speech and language pathologists**
- **Occupational therapists**
- **Physical therapists**
- **Psychologists and social workers**
- **Instructional facilitators**
- **Elementary general education teachers**
- **Secondary general education teachers**
- **Special education co-teachers**
- **Parents**
- **Elementary paraprofessionals**
- **Secondary paraprofessionals**
- **Reading and math specialists**
- **Elementary principals**
- **Elementary assistant principals**
- **Secondary principals**
- **Secondary assistant principals**

Additionally, the following leadership roles were interviewed during this process:

- **High school instructional team leaders**
- **Middle school instructional team leaders**
- **Elementary instructional team leaders**
- **Curriculum directors**
- **Elementary curriculum coordinators**
- **Secondary curriculum coordinators**
- **Chief of Accountability**
- **Special education and student services leadership**
- **Administrative directors**
- **Deputy superintendent**
- **Superintendent**

- Executive director of special education and student services
- Chief finance officer and staff

A comprehensive list of all interview and focus group participants can be found in the document posted on the district’s website: <http://www.hcpss.org/f/special/special-education-opportunities-dmc-project-2015-16.pdf>

- ii. How were interviewees selected?

The focus group and interview schedule was compiled as a joint effort between district leadership and school leaders.

- iii. Were interview questions tested prior to conducting the interviews? If so, please elaborate.

The interview and focus group questions are structured to facilitate conversations around the current supports and structures in place which support struggling learners with and without IEPs. The goal of the focus groups and interviews is to understand at a high level current practices for both intervention models and special education support models as well as major strengths and areas of frustration. These are open-ended conversations and not intended to be tabulated results but rather to identify broad themes, strengths, concerns and practices. This interview and focus group model had been used by DMC successfully in many districts across the nation.

- iv. What were the exact interview questions? Please share the interview questions/interview guides.

The following protocol was used by DMC in conducting focus groups with stakeholders in Howard County Public School System. Please note that these are only examples of questions posed during focus groups. Actual questions asked during the focus groups were tailored to each group and adjusted based on the areas and topics most important to the participants.

- I. DMC Introduction & Background**
- II. Focus Group Participant Introductions & Background**
- III. Questions for Focus Group Participants**

Sample questions:

- 1. What is working well with special education in Howard County Public School System?**
- 2. What frustrates you about special education in Howard County Public School System?**
- 3. What role do you play in Howard County Public School System and what is your role in providing supports to students who struggle?**

- a. What is your role in the IEP process?
4. Does Howard County Public School System do a good job with inclusion? Why or why not?
5. Inclusion, co-teaching, pullout...what strategies are most effective for educating students with mild-to-moderate disabilities? What evidence do you have?
6. If I were a student at your school who struggled academically, what additional supports would be available to me, let's assume I don't have an IEP?
 - a. Follow up as needed:
 - i. Different for reading/ELA versus math?
 - ii. How much extra time?
 - iii. How would you determine that I need additional supports?
 - iv. How would you determine if I no longer needed supports?
 - v. How would the remediation/intervention be related to my core class? For reading support, would there be a focus on phonics and/or comprehension?
7. If I were a student in your school who struggled academically, what supports would be available to me, let's assume I have an IEP?
 - a. Follow up as needed:
 - i. Different for reading/ELA versus math?
 - ii. How much extra time?
 - iii. How would you determine that I need additional supports?
 - iv. How would you determine if I no longer needed supports?
 - v. How would the remediation/intervention be related to my core class? For reading support, would there be a focus on phonics and/or comprehension?
8. During a typical professional development activity, do the special education and intervention teachers attend similar trainings as general education teachers?
9. Do you think there is a clear articulation of roles and responsibilities between central office and schools?
 - a. Between special education and general education with regards to serving students with special needs or struggling students in general?
10. How would you describe the use of data from assessments at your school? Are there data meetings? How often?

11. If you could change/make stronger one thing in the district's supports and services for students requiring additional support, what would you do?

b. Regarding the "online parent survey":

- i. Were all parents invited to participate in the survey? If not, how were they selected?

Once the survey questions had been discussed and vetted with district leadership, DMC generated a link for the survey which was then forwarded to district leadership. The leaders sent the link to parents of students with IEPs. There were 302 responses.

- ii. What was the response rate?

As noted above, once the survey questions had been discussed and vetted with district leadership, DMC generated a link for the survey which was then forwarded to district leadership. The leaders sent the link to parents of students with IEPs. There were 302 responses.

- iii. Was a non-response analysis conducted (assuming there was not a 100% response rate)?

The purpose of the parent survey was to provide an opportunity for parents to have voice in the research and to highlight strengths or concerns. Any survey responses by parents helped inform the Special Education Opportunity Review wherever possible, alongside extensive in-person interviews, classroom visits, benchmarking against best practices and like communities, and other research.

- iv. Were the survey items tested and validated prior to launching the survey?

The survey was thoroughly reviewed by DMC and Howard County Public School System who worked together to ensure the survey was tailored and relevant to the district. The purpose of the parent survey was to provide an opportunity for parents to have voice in the research and to highlight strengths or concerns.

- v. Please share the survey items.

Please see the document attached titled "HCPSS Special Education Parent Survey"

c. Regarding "classroom visits":

- i. What was the purpose(s) of the classroom visits?

The classroom visits included a sampling of programs for serving students with severe needs, emotional/behavioral disabilities, resource room support, co-teaching, intervention groups for students without IEPs, and/or other programs. Classroom observations provide a means to develop a feel for the special programs

and supports in place for struggling learners across the district. They also help firm up the learnings from interviews and focus groups. Data and benchmarking, along with onsite interviews and classroom observations, provide a full picture of special education and support for struggling students.

- ii. Was there a standardized observation form? (If so, please share.)

As noted above, observations are not evaluative, they are purely observations of special education and intervention models to help bring greater clarity to the feedback shared via the focus groups and interviews.

d. Regarding "benchmarking against best practices":

- i. How were these "best practices" derived?

Please see the Appendix of this document for the best practice sources. Please note that this is the current source list. It may include more recent articles since the preliminary findings were delivered to the district.

- ii. Please share any citations or other reports from which the best practices were derived.

Please see the Appendix of this document for the best practice sources. Please note that this is the current source list. It may include more recent articles since the preliminary findings were delivered to the district.

e. Regarding "other research":

- i. Please explain what is contained in "other research."

Please see the Appendix of this document for the best practice sources. Please note that this is the current source list, it may include more recent articles since the preliminary findings were delivered to the district.

- 2. Was the data gathering (interviews, survey) reviewed by a Human Subjects Protection panel or Institutional Review Board or Ethics Panel? If not, why not? If so, please provide a copy of the approval form. Did participants sign a consent form? If not, why not? If so, please provide a copy of the consent form(s).

Our data gathering is not a formal research study, but a regular practice of managing a school system. All participants in the interviews were informed in advance of their purpose and participation was voluntary.

- 3. The Howard County Achievement Gap data presented on page 5 is inappropriate. Comparing "All Students" with "Students with Disabilities" violates the statistical principle of independence. The appropriate comparison would be "Students without Disabilities" vs.

"Students with Disabilities". It is likely that the real achievement gaps are even larger than what is presented in the report.

It does appear that this chart was mislabeled. The data listed as “All Students” is “Regular Education” students (without disabilities) data. As reported on the state testing results website:

<http://msp2014.msde.state.md.us/MsaTrends.aspx?PV=1:3:13:AAAA:2:N:0:1:1:2:1:1:1:1:3>

4. Similar to the issue presented in #2, the district comparisons for "All Students" are also flawed. The legitimate comparison would be "Students without Disabilities." (The district comparisons of "Students with Disabilities" is fine.)

It does appear that this chart was mislabeled. The data listed as “All Students” is “Regular Education” students (without disabilities) data. As reported on the state testing results website:

<http://msp2014.msde.state.md.us/MsaTrends.aspx?PV=1:3:13:AAAA:2:N:0:1:1:2:1:1:1:1:3>

5. What data are provided to support the recommendations contained in the report? Presumably, the goal is to reduce the achievement gap between "Students without Disabilities" versus "Students with Disabilities." Is there data to support DMC's recommendations regarding, for example, co-teaching and shifting the roles of paraprofessionals? None is provided in the report; if there is data to support the recommendations then please provide. Or, alternatively, is DMC suggesting that an experiment be conducted within the school system to determine if implementation of certain recommendations results in a reduction in the achievement gaps between the two student groups? Please clarify.

Please see the Appendix of this document for the best practice sources. Please note that this is the current source list. It may include more recent articles since the preliminary findings were delivered to the district.

“Additional questions regarding the DMC Report” document

Questions flagged for DMC

C) Parent Survey

a. General:

- i. Please describe the process in soliciting participation of parents in the survey.

The district, rather than DMC, coordinated participation of parents in the survey.

- ii. Based on the data provided it appears that 302 persons participated in the survey. However, in calculating percentages of responses to the survey items, a different denominator is used for each question because those who skip a particular item are not included in the calculation of the percentages for that particular item. This is confusing – it would have been better to hold the denominator constant at 302 and calculate the percentages based on a denominator of 302, including a percentage for those who skipped the question.
 1. Was there any rule for not including a respondent, for example, if a respondent skipped all the questions? Or 8 out of 9 questions?

Standard online survey tools were used for this parent survey. Often, online survey tools automatically use the number of responses to calculate the “percentage of responses” for each question instead of using the total number of participants of the survey.

- iii. Could two parents of a child with disabilities participate in the survey or was it limited to one parent per child? Similarly, if a parent had more than one child with disabilities enrolled in the school system, were they expected (or were they allowed) to complete a survey for each child? The experiences of the two children could be different.

Parents were not limited to their responses. More than one parent could respond, and a parent could respond for each child.

- iv. What were the instructions provided for the survey? Could you provide screen shots of the entire survey, including the home page, any instructions, item pages, and a closing page?

Please see the document attached titled “HCPSS Special Education Parent Survey”

- v. What proportion/percentage of possible respondents participated in the survey? Was a nonresponse analysis conducted?

There were 302 survey respondents. The purpose of the parent survey was to provide an opportunity for parents to have voice in the research and to highlight strengths or concerns. Any survey responses by parents helped inform the Special Education Opportunity Review wherever possible, alongside extensive in-person interviews, classroom visits, benchmarking against best practices and like communities, and other research.

- vi. Was any consideration given to soliciting basic demographic information like race and ethnicity (with the option to “Choose not to respond”)?

This was not data that we collected.

- vii. What was the purpose of the survey?

The purpose of the parent survey was to provide an opportunity for parents to have voice in the research and to highlight strengths or concerns. Any survey responses by parents helped inform the Special Education Opportunity Review wherever possible, alongside extensive in-person interviews, classroom visits, benchmarking against best practices and like communities, and other research.

- viii. How were results from the survey used to inform DMC’s recommendations?

In addition to focus groups, interviews, staff schedule sharing and data collection, parent surveys help provide insight into current supports and processes in place for supporting struggling students as well areas of strengths and concerns.

b. Question 1:

- i. What were the roles of the respondents who indicated “Other” (e.g., Guardian, Grandparent)?

The roles of the respondents who indicated “Other” were primarily “guardians”, “grandparents”, and a few parents who did not select the first response option.

c. Question 2:

- i. Am I correct in assuming that this is a “check all that apply” item? If so, was that instruction specifically provided?

This question is a matrix item with a rating scale, which likely behaves a lot like a “check all that apply” item that you refer to. The goal was to allow parents to share as much information as they felt comfortable providing. This question (and each question in the survey) was not “required” to allow parents to fill out only what they felt comfortable completing.

- ii. What is the value of the “Multiple Disabilities” response option, assuming that the instructions indicated to check all that apply?

“Multiple disabilities” could be used in cases where parents did not feel comfortable selecting their student’s disability on the survey form or felt that this was the appropriate selection.

d. Question 3:

- i. In-district/Out-of-district: Does “district” refer to Howard County or to the home school of the child?

For in-district and out-of-district, “district” refers to Howard County Public School System.

e. Question 4:

- i. The stem is not really accurate given the response options. You are not really asking them to select which items they agree with; you are asking them to indicate whether they agree or disagree with each of the items. A more appropriate wording might have been: “This group of statements concerns your child’s education over the last 12 months. For each of the statements, indicate whether you agree or disagree.” ***This is not a question***
- ii. What does N/A mean – Not Applicable? Can you give an example of when an item might be “not applicable?” For example, if “Out-of-district” means outside of Howard County, wouldn’t it have been better to terminate the survey for these respondents at the point when it was known that the child was not receiving services in Howard County? But there may be other situations for which one of the sub-items is not applicable, and I would like to know about these.

N/A is meant to mean “not applicable,” to be used at the discretion of the respondent.

f. Question 5:

- i. Same comment as for Q4. A better wording of the stem would have been, “This next group of statements concerns the process of developing your child’s IEP/IFSP. For each of these statements, indicate whether you agree or disagree.” ***This is not a question***
- ii. Please explain the large percentages of N/A responses for statements 1, 3 and 4?

Often, survey respondents may reply with “N/A” when the question does not apply to them, when they don’t have much experience with the topic being questioned or they are unclear as to what the question is asking. No information to help further

understand what resulted in the number of “N/A” responses we received was gathered from the survey responders.

g. Question 6:

- i. Same comment as for Q’s 4 & 5. A better wording of the stem would have been, “This next group of statements concerns inclusion for students on IEPs. For each of these statements, indicate whether you agree or disagree.” ***This is not a question***
- ii. Please explain the large percentages of N/A responses for statements 2 and 3.

Often, survey respondents may reply with “N/A” when the question does not apply to them, when they don’t have much experience with the topic being questioned or they are unclear as to what the question is asking. No information to help further understand what resulted in the number of “N/A” responses we received was gathered from the survey responders.

h. Question 7:

- i. Same comment as for Q’s 4, 5, and 6. A better wording of the stem would have been, “This next group of statements concern paraprofessionals for students on IEPs. For each of these statements, indicate whether you agree or disagree.” ***This is not a question***
- ii. Please explain the large percentages of N/A responses for all of these statements.

Often, survey respondents may reply with “N/A” when the question does not apply to them, when they don’t have much experience with the topic being questioned or they are unclear as to what the question is asking. No information to help further understand what resulted in the number of “N/A” responses we received was gathered from the survey responders.

- iii. Looking at statement #2 specifically, “The district should have a few more paraprofessionals”, how do you interpret a disagree response? Does it mean that the current number is just right, or maybe that the district should have a lot more paraprofessionals?

The disagree response was included to mean that the respondent disagreed with the statement provided. Those respondents that disagreed to this statement do not agree that “the district should have a few more paraprofessionals”.

i. Questions 8 and 9:

- i. A large number of respondents skipped these questions but that is typical for open-ended survey items. ***This is not a question***

- ii. What kind of analysis was performed on the qualitative responses? Can you provide the results?

The qualitative responses were reviewed in detail. Together, DMC and Howard County Public School System determined not to provide any summary of these qualitative responses in the Highlights for Sharing report, given the nature of open-ended questions that result in nearly each response being different and perhaps identifying the respondent or their child. The results can be found on the district's website: <http://www.hcpss.org/f/special/special-education-opportunities-dmc-project-2015-16.pdf>

- iii. Instead of, or in addition to Question #8, was any consideration given to providing a list of the various aspects of special education and asking persons to respond on a scale with “very satisfied” as one anchor and “very dissatisfied” as the other anchor (or other descriptors, e.g., “very pleased”/“very displeased”)? It is well known that open-ended questions generally have low response rates so closed-ended questions are typically used in addition to an open-ended question on the same topic.

Many options for questions were considered in creation of this parent survey. Often surveys try to strike a balance between close-ended questions and open-ended questions that allow respondents to share information more freely. The survey was thoroughly reviewed by DMC and Howard County Public School System who worked together to ensure the survey was relevant and welcoming to parents in the district.

[From Parent Group] COMMENT: The survey seems inadequate to me given the broad range of services and persons served under the broad catch-all term of “Special Education.” More and specific questions, with associated skip patterns to reduce the burden on respondents, could/should have been included to obtain useful information.

D) Report:

There are two reports that are very similar. I have already provided comments and questions to the “Highlights for Sharing” report. Therefore, the following questions/comments refer to the Report that was provided to the BoE on January 29, 2015. I will not comment on the PowerPoint presentation as slides are generally talking points and I do not know what was actually said in reference to the information presented on the slides.

- a. Could you tell me the make-up of the population of students with disabilities in each of the districts referenced on page 3? This is important because differences on the MSA Reading Assessment among districts could result from differences in the population served in the district.

All districts listed in this section reported that approximately 0-1% of 3rd grade students took the MSA-ALT in 2014. As noted on the State Department of

Education’s website, “Students with disabilities in grades 3-8 and 10 must participate in either MSA or ALT-MSA. The decision for which assessment is appropriate for an individual student is made by each student’s IEP team.” Per this quote, the state required that the remaining students with disabilities take the standard MSA. Details into the specific disabilities of the students with special needs taking the MSA in 2014 is protected by FERPA laws.

Sources: <http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/testing/msa/index.html>

- b. Can you tell me what proportion of students with disabilities in each of the districts took the MSA? I don’t believe that 100% of students with disabilities take the MSA and this could differ among the districts.

As noted above, ~1% of the students in 3rd grade took the ALT-MSA in the year 2014. Per the above quote, the state required that the remaining students with disabilities take the standard MSA.

- c. On page 5 the statement is made, “The research for this project included extensive in-person interviews, an online parent survey...” No mention is made of the focus group that was conducted with a group of parents. Are interview and focus group used interchangeably here? They are very different and a focus group involves group dynamics requiring an experienced and skilled focus group facilitator to moderate these group dynamic effects.

The term “interviews” is used here as an all-encompassing statement for the on-site interviews with 6-10 representatives of the following roles in each group:

- **Elementary special education teachers**
- **Secondary special education teachers**
- **Speech and language pathologists**
- **Occupational therapists**
- **Physical therapists**
- **Psychologists and social workers**
- **Instructional facilitators**
- **Elementary general education teachers**
- **Secondary general education teachers**
- **Special education co-teachers**
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Additionally, the following leadership roles were interviewed during this process:

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- **Executive director of special education and student services**
- **Chief finance officer and staff**

A comprehensive list of all interview and focus group participants can be found in the document posted on the district’s website: <http://www.hcpss.org/f/special/special-education-opportunities-dmc-project-2015-16.pdf>

- d. On page 5 the statement is made, “In an online survey, 81% of parents of students with disabilities indicated that their students were **welcomed** (my emphasis) into the school community.” The actual statement on the survey used the word **accepted**, not welcomed. These words are not equivalent.
- e. On page 8 there is discussion about co-teaching and “many staff acknowledged that co-teaching was not being implemented with fidelity due to limited co-planning time and other demands ...” So the conclusion seems to be to get rid of co-teaching. Might a solution be to put in place processes to ensure that co-teaching is implemented with fidelity?

As noted in the research in the Appendix of this document, co-teaching can be a valuable model when partnered with adequate co-planning time, extensive training on successful co-teaching methodology, and a fine-tuned monitoring system to ensure the model is supporting student growth. The findings from interviews, focus groups, and staff schedule sharing were noting that currently, best practices for co-teaching may not be in place in all classrooms across the district.

- f. On page 8 there is now reference to “struggling readers” and “struggling students”. And further along in the report, students with disabilities and struggling students seem to be lumped together or the terms used interchangeably. Are they one and the same? Doesn’t this tend to muddy the waters? What is the definition of a “struggling student?”

Throughout the report “struggling students” is a term used to encompass not just students with mild to moderate disabilities, but also at-risk students without IEPs, and some ELL students and non-readers. As the best practice research in the Appendix shows, many of these students groups share common challenges: many struggle to read and comprehend, many have skill deficits from prior grades, many require multiple modes of instruction, and many learn and process information differently from their peers. Districts that have made gains in supporting this group have found that often a similar approach for many types of struggling learners can be effective.

- g. On page 13 in the section on Speech and Language Pathologists (SLPs), the report indicates that the average case-load in Howard County is 28 students compared to the “typical” caseload nationally of 50 students. What does “typical” mean in this context? Is it the average? The report then states that this low caseload is partly due to SLPs providing nearly half of their services 1:1. Is that a bad thing or a good thing? Is DMC recommending that Howard County reduce the amount of 1:1 services in order to increase the caseload (which could reduce the number of employees)?

Please refer to the Speech and Language source citation section in the Appendix of this document for sources on average national caseload.

- h. On page 13 in the section on Physical Therapists (PTs) reference is made to a benchmarking analysis using “like districts across the nation”. What were the criteria for determining a “like district?” Could you provide the list of “like districts” that were used in this benchmarking analysis? And at the bottom of the page it is stated that “similar districts typically serve about 40% more students with disabilities.” I find that number difficult to accept at face-value. Could you provide some hard data?

For benchmarking purposes, like districts across the nation are determined based on a similar profile of per student spending, and free and reduced lunch rates and adjusted for total enrollment. The statement regarding the “serving 40% more students” is calculated by dividing the staffing support per 1,000 students for Howard County Public School System and like communities across the nation utilizing the data listed in the corresponding table in the preliminary findings document. This figure stated is an average for the speech and language and occupational therapy role.

- i. For the Tables that show the percentage of time spent on specific activities (SLP’s on page 12, Special Ed Teachers on page 15, and Special Ed Paraeducators on page 16), how were these data derived?

As part of the data collection process, each staff member supporting a struggling student was requested to share their typical weekly schedule. The activities listed in the speech and language chart were discussed during the speech and language on-site focus group. During the typical weekly schedule sharing, staff entered their daily responsibilities for a week. The duration of each activity was aggregated to summarize on average how much time the they dedicated to each task.

Appendix: Supporting Research on Best Practices

General:

- “Seeking Effective Policies and Practices for Students with Special Needs.” Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy. Spring 2009.
- Hattie, John. *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. Routledge, 2013.
- “Special Education: A Service, Not a Place.” New Jersey School Boards Association. March 11, 2014.
- Eidelman, Hadas, Grindal, Todd, Hehir, Thomas. “Review of Special Education in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.” Report commissioned by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. April 2012.

Reading:

- A KIDS COUNT Special Report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. “Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters.” Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2010.
- Armbruster, Bonnie B., Lehr, Fran, Osborn, Jean. “Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read: Kindergarten Through Grade 3.” National Institute for Literacy: The Partnership for Reading, 2001.
- Hernandez, Donald J. "Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation." *Annie E. Casey Foundation* (2011).
- “Improving K-5 Literacy Outcomes.” Hanover Research, January 2015.
- Report of the National Reading Panel. “Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction.” National Reading Panel, 2000.
- Shanahan, Timothy, et al. "Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade: IES Practice Guide. NCEE 2010-4038." *What Works Clearinghouse* (2010).
- Sweet, Anne P., McGuire, C. Kent, Riley, Richard W. *Ten Proven Principles of Teaching Reading*. National Education Association, 2000.
- What Works Clearinghouse

Importance of Standards & General Education:

- Courtade, Ginevra, et al. "Seven reasons to promote standards-based instruction for students with severe disabilities: A reply to Ayres, Lowrey, Douglas, & Sievers (2011)." *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities* (2012): 3-13.
- Reeves, Douglas B. *Making standards work: How to implement standards-based assessments in the classroom, school, and district*. Lead+ Learn Press, 2002.

Targeted Interventions:

- *Assisting students struggling with reading: Response to intervention and multi-tier intervention in the primary grades.* US Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, 2009.
- Denton, C. A.; Fletcher, J. M.; Anthony, J. L. and Francis, D. J. "An Evaluation of Intensive Intervention for Students with Persistent Reading Difficulties." *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 39, 447-466, 2006.
- DuFour, Richard, DuFour, Rebecca, Robert Eaker, and Gayle Karhanek. *Whatever it takes: How professional learning communities respond when kids don't learn.* Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service, 2004.
- Kelly, Corrie. "Reading Intervention Programs: A Comparative Chart." Reading Rockets, 2001.
- Stiggins, Rick, and Rick DuFour. "Maximizing the power of formative assessments." *Phi Delta Kappan* 90.9 (2009): 640-644.

Quality of Teachers:

- Darling-Hammond, Linda. "Teacher quality and student achievement." *Education policy analysis archives* 8 (2000): 1.
- Joyce, B., and Showers, B. "Student achievement through staff development" (3rd ed.). Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2002.
- National Council on Teacher Quality, "Teacher Prep Ratings," 2014.
- Public Impact's OpportunityCulture.org website
- Rice, Jennifer King. *Teacher Quality: Understanding the Effectiveness of Teacher Attributes.* Economic Policy Institute, Washington, DC, 2003.
- Suh, Thomas-Fore. "The National Council on Teacher Quality: Expanding the Teacher Quality Discussion. ERIC Digest." (2002).
- Walsh, Kate, Deborah Glaser, and Danielle Dunne Wilcox. "What education schools aren't teaching about reading and what Elementary teachers aren't learning." *National Council on Teacher Quality* (2006).

Paraprofessionals:

- "A Study of the Use of Paraprofessionals to Deliver Special Education Services in Vermont Schools", the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute (UMDI), March 2015.
- Broer, Stephen M., Doyle, Mary Beth, Halvorsen, Ann T., Giangreco, Michael F. "Alternatives to overreliance on paraprofessionals in inclusive schools." *Journal of Special Education Leadership* 17.2 (2004): 82.
- Causton-Theoharis, Julie N. "The golden rule of providing support in inclusive classrooms: Support others as you would wish to be supported." *Teaching Exceptional Children* 42.2 (2009): 36-43.

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