

RSM Executive Summary

Status Update

October 2, 2017

RSM performed a Third Party Review of the general (GenEd) and Special Education (SPED) budgets for Watertown Public Schools (WPS) to provide guidance on how to best proceed with future funding that will adequately meet the schools' needs in March, 2016. This Status Update provides the Watertown School Committee with information regarding the implementation of the recommendations from the Third Party Review. The following indicators have been used to provide the update:

Implemented: Complete

Partially Implemented: The district is moving forward with the recommendations

Not Implemented: Either the district has a different plan for the recommendation or has yet to determine a course of action to address the recommendation.

The Central Administration Leadership Team will answer any questions that the School Committee may have at the October School Committee Meeting.

No.	Recommendation	Details	Status	NOTES
1A	Review organizational structure and implement recommended changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adjust reporting structure to more accurately reflect current roles and responsibilities• Elevate Director of Business Services to Assistant Superintendent position	Implemented	

No.	Recommendation	Details	Status	NOTES
1B	Develop a strategy to encourage a quality, long-term tenure for the Director of Special Education position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct formal review of the special education budget, comparing it to needed services, WPS mission, and goals, shifting funds to areas of greatest need 	Partially Implemented	This is what we are currently working on as a cabinet, not just to ensure the tenure of the Special Education Director (now the Student Services Director) but all central administrators
1C	Provide additional budget clarity, with attention to fund source and historical data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase awareness of sources used for non-Town appropriated funds (e.g. grants and user fees) Conduct 3-year historical lookback for comparative data 	Implemented	
1D	Update policy for School Committee approvals and monitoring of the annual budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update transfer policy to reflect a formal threshold or situation for review 	Implemented	

No.	Recommendation	Details	Status	NOTES
1E	Update formal business and accounting process policy guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review fund deposit processing procedures of student activity accounts to accelerate timeline ● Conduct and monitoring of weekly deposits ● Continue proactive efforts to effectively align with MGL regulatory requirements 	Partially implemented Partially implemented Partially implemented	The Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations is currently creating systems and protocols to ensure that these activities are happening
1F	Establish formal SPED stabilization fund policies and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft and approve policy with Town Council to formalize stabilization fund controls and disbursement 	Partially Implemented	Draft has been provided to the Town with a resolution in the near future.
2A	Formalize budget procedures and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue automation and standardization of budget information collection ● Set formal role and timing expectations 	Implemented	

No.	Recommendation	Details	Status	NOTES
2B	Accelerate budget development timeline and include multiyear forecasts*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Structure budget development submission and review processes earlier in the calendar year ● Continue efforts to provide appropriate detail, justification, and clarity in budget documentation for community understanding ● Provide multiyear forecasts as part of formal submission process 	Implemented	
2C	Assess and improve student data collection process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider assessment to align with Implementation of Power School SIS; system will improve data and accessibility ● Continue New England School Development Council (NESDEC) enrollment studies 	Partially Implemented	<p>Three year plan for to build a data culture</p> <p>Tech Talk and Tech Committee have been formed to create a Technology Plan</p> <p>Asst. Supt. For Teaching Learning and Assessment will be considering with a team universal screens and data collection methods</p> <p>Yearly enrollment projections will be completed</p>

No.	Recommendation	Details	Status	NOTES
3A	Increase staff planning time and clearly formalize common planning time expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue to provide formal meetings for staff to discuss student need, teaching, and learning strategies ● For SPED staff, develop a clear process of who can commit resources at team meetings 	Partially Implemented	<p>Middle school has common planning time five days a week</p> <p>Elementary: Two planning times per month one that can be directed with an agenda</p> <p>In two elementary buildings, teachers have additional common planning time above and beyond the 2 stipulated in contract.</p> <p>Preschool: Time is built in for professional collaboration</p> <p>High school: department common planning is in place several times a week.</p>
3B	Provide formal technology training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue to conduct joint training for shared tasks/touchpoints across School and Town 	Partially implemented	Training for Munis across the departments would be beneficial

No.	Recommendation	Details	Status	NOTES
3C	Conduct formal School IT assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Formally review governance, IT processes, procedures, and systems 	Implemented	
3D	Continue and further implement co-teaching across schools at all levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Already exists in a successful model; WPS co-teaching should continue implementation across schools ● Continue and further implement co-teaching across schools; consider joint SPED/GenEd model ● Provide specific training around various co-teaching models 	Implemented	Training is ongoing
3E	Consider MUNIS's Project & Grant Accounting Module	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop fund-level workflows ● Create clarity around projects phases, tasks, sub-tasks, and activities with versatile granularity ● Actively track grant applications and history through its lifecycle 	Not implemented	The District currently has systems in place to ensure that these tasks are accomplished

No.	Recommendation	Details	Status	NOTES
OA	Provide School Committee with monthly budget updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Generate monthly reports with detailed updates regarding budget statuses, anticipated updates, and initiatives 	Implemented	
OB	Increase collaboration between School and Town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Study additional areas of administrative collaboration (e.g. Accounting, Facilities, and IT) 	Partially implemented	Director of Public Buildings has been hired, with dual reporting to the Town and the Schools. Other areas may not make as much sense for collaboration, as the functions are very specific to schools.
OC	Hold bi-monthly meetings between the Town Managers and Superintendent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide regular updates around goals, activities, and progress ● Arrange occasional on-site check-ins 	Implemented	

Special Education

No.	Recommendation	Details	Status	NOTES
1A	Update program descriptions and develop a district-wide SPED process and procedure manual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If an item is needed that is part of the overall curriculum, that item should come from the GenEd budget ● SPED budget should contain a line item to purchase and track assistive technology related to IEPs ● All students with special education requirements should be included in the purchase of textbooks and other curriculum items ● Develop clear program descriptions, including entry and exit criteria 	<p>Implemented</p> <p>Implemented</p> <p>Implemented</p> <p>Partially Implemented</p>	<p>In progress; goal for completion June 2018</p>
1B	Continue development of district-wide Curriculum Accommodation Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have accommodation listed at each level ● Ensure that all schools follow this plan ● Articulate plan requirements to GenEd staff ● Provide training on expectations and roles regarding accommodation in the classroom, as well as what GenEd instructors can provide 	<p>Partially implemented</p> <p>Partially implemented</p> <p>Partially implemented</p> <p>Partially implemented</p>	<p>DCAP needs updating by committee of general educators</p> <p>Training is ongoing, part of Opening Day trainings and embedded PD</p>

No.	Recommendation	Details	Status	NOTES
1C	Review eligibility requirements and develop a strong, consistent Response to Intervention (RTI) system in all schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review eligibility requirements under IDEA and Section 504 ● Train all general education (Gen Ed) and SPED staff around the tier interventions ● Train Gen Ed staff regarding their role in meeting the needs of all students ● Review the current progress monitoring systems; train staff in data collection ● Maintain data teams in each building 	<p>Implemented for IDEA</p> <p>Not implemented</p> <p>Partially implemented</p> <p>Partially Implemented</p> <p>Partially Implemented</p>	<p>Training for ETCs; eligibility flowchart used at all eligibility team meetings</p> <p>MTSS goal for District this year</p> <p>Training for gen. ed. staff is ongoing- part of Opening Day</p> <p>District will be adopting a universal screen and progress monitoring system</p> <p>Grade level/department teams meet to look at data this year</p>
1D	Complete instructional assistant audit based on current student need and update previous audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop process for teams to track actual student need in relation to one-to-one requests ● Base decisions on actual need rather than perceived need 	<p>Partially implemented</p> <p>Partially implemented</p>	<p>Training provided to evaluation Team chairs</p> <p>Research shared with staff and parents</p> <p>Ongoing training for administrators, teachers, and instructional assistants in roles of IAs</p>

No.	Recommendation	Details	Status	NOTES
2A	Develop a formal five-year plan for the Special Education Department; match this to the budget process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop goals for SPED that align with District mission and vision 	Partially Implemented	Development to align with development of District 5 year plan
2B	Complete current organizational review of Special Education in Watertown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify root cause of turnover and take measures to ensure SPED staff longevity ● Develop formal profiles for each position and match to new hires ● Have accommodation listed at each level ● Ensure shifts are created based on student need ● Consider future work with outside agencies to assist with prediction of trends and/or what might be on the horizon 	Partially implemented Partially implemented Partially implemented Implemented Implemented	

No.	Recommendation	Details	Status	NOTES
2C	Continue plan to programming to lower out-of-district placements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create profiles for each student and compare records within a 48-month age grouping; look for critical numbers of students with similar profiles ● Study placements and their qualities, with an eye toward replication across WPS ● Use funds currently used for out-of-district students toward program creation intended to bring students back and prevent further leaves ● Begin with behavioral health-oriented programs and creating programming geared toward providing a therapeutic environment ● Involve parents in departmental goal-setting and the hiring of the incoming SPED Director; reach out to outside-placed families to drive need gathering at WPS 	<p>Implemented</p> <p>Partially implemented</p> <p>Not implemented</p> <p>Implemented</p> <p>Partially implemented</p>	<p>This work is ongoing</p> <p>Cannot move funds needed for students who are outplaced</p> <p>With the opening of the ISP at the Lowell, WPS has a full complement of programming at all levels</p> <p>Parents were involved in hire and outreach in progress</p>

No.	Recommendation	Details	Status	NOTES
2D	Enhance existing parent-focused learning opportunities to assist parents in making education a priority at home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide training on strategies to assist children ● Offer classroom nights where children can participate in an activity while parents attend workshops ● Implement events and networks around focused initiatives to foster a community of involved SPED families 	<p>Implemented</p> <p>Implemented</p> <p>Implemented</p>	<p>Building based</p> <p>Working with SEPAC and community service</p> <p>Working with SEPAC to provide these events</p>
3A	Consider leveraging technology to automate SPED processes and better support students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide each conference/meeting room for Team meetings with a computer and projector to show IEPs to the team, while making changes at the meeting ● Consider technology to automate IEPs; develop a defined process for this task ● Consider electronic curriculum materials ● Consider additional partnerships to provide training for Assistive Technology 	<p>Not implemented</p> <p>Partially implemented</p> <p>Implemented</p> <p>Implemented</p>	<p>We will work to determine the feasibility of this based on individual buildings</p> <p>Adopted PowerSchool IEP</p> <p>Whenever possible, and piloting ATLAS</p>

No.	Recommendation	Details	Status	NOTES
3B	Develop and continue strategic partnerships with the Perkins School and other local collaboratives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider developing a community-wide partnership around behavioral and physical well-being ● Look to local collaboratives for low-cost options for out-of-district services ● Partnerships with institutes of higher learning would assist with this initiative ● Offer Perkins the opportunity to include their students at Watertown schools ● Consult with Perkins around the needs of visually-impaired students and program development ● Bring other districts into the conversation with an effort to identify program needs for students across districts, developing and housing programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Partially implemented ● Implemented ● Implemented ● Not implemented <p>Partially Implemented</p>	
3C	Apply for Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) funding as it becomes available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apply for additional grant monies through ESSA to drive program development and provide funds for additional student support 	Admin	

