

Montpelier Roxbury Public Schools

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Our schools are caring, creative, and equitable communities that empower all children to build on their talents and passions to grow into engaged citizens and life-long learners.

10/08/2021

Thank you for inviting me to testify today. I am the Superintendent of Schools for Montpelier Roxbury Public Schools (MRPS). My formal role as Director of Curriculum and Instruction for what is now Missisquoi Valley School District will also influence this testimony.

MRPS currently has 40 students in need of English Language services representing 4% of our student population. We employ 2.6 FTE in human resources for our current caseload to the expense of \$210,000 for FY22. Our population of English Learners fluctuates with a bulk of students in the early elementary grades. National Life Group influences our EL population. National Life employs families from abroad for what appears to be short durations - families come for a few years and leave.

As I understand the brainstorming around the weighting study, the committee is considering a grant type mechanism in addition to per pupil rates for English Language learners. Because of our small economy of scale, this makes sense for my District. The tax implications of a simple weight for our small numbers would not likely come close to assisting in our yearly costs to service these students.

Should the committee go in a direction of a grant, we do have some questions/concerns to consider. The current Title III grant for English Language learners is not sufficient to cover costs. For instance, in my former District, we qualified for a little over \$3000. This was nowhere near our costs and because of Federal and State requirements for Title III, the bureaucratic hoops we would have to jump through to get the small amount of money was not worth the effort. We would request that the process for obtaining any future grant funding be a simple process.

We also would like to put forth the idea of reimbursement for costs associated with EL services that may be in the form of a grant. This could be a percentage of total costs for services once that number is known within the fiscal year.

I have also been asked to share the MPRS process for budgeting. We do not create our budget through individual schools but as a District. We do this for several reasons:

- we want to ensure alignment for our preK-12 continuum;
- we value visioning as a District so our students and caregivers have a clear pathway to

graduation;

- we create a District-wide Continuous Improvement Plan centered on District Theories of Growth. Each school does make differentiated improvement plans, but those are centered on the District's work. This helps with economy of scale for professional development, common language, and staffing needs;
- District-wide Policies such as class size dictate a District approach to budgeting;
- English Language and Special Education services are a District responsibility
 - Special Education moved to the District level in the school year 2015-2016.
 - Special Education is one of the largest drivers in our budget

I'm happy to answer any questions you have to the best of my abilities. Thank you for your time today.

Libby Bonesteel

Superintendent of Schools

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