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TESTIMONY PROVIDED TO: The House Education Committee  
FROM: Karin Edwards, Director, Integrated Support for Learning Division  
Cindy Moran, State Director of Special Education  
SUBJECT: AOE Support for District Management Group recommendations  
DATE: January 12, 2018

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### **Opportunity:**

Implementation of the recommendations made by the District Management Group (DMG) requires changes to both beliefs and actions regarding how educational systems in Vermont function to support all students including those who struggle and those with disabilities. The current approach has taken years to establish and it will take time to make the changes DMG recommends. These are complex changes and involve aligning educational systems with careful coordination of core instruction, intervention, and intensive supports for both academics and behavior.

### **Plans for Support from the Agency of Education:**

The hard work of making the changes recommended by DMG must be aligned to the potential changes in the way special education is funded. This “on the ground work” will be done by educators in the schools, SUs and SDs. Staff at the Agency of Education will listen to, work with and support these educators with technical assistance, professional learning and resources. At the AOE, we are already engaged in the first steps to support this system redesign so that it aligns with the 5 opportunities/recommendations from DMG.

### **Teams and Alignment**

1. Core group of ISL members meet weekly to coordinate support efforts, identify and manage contracts, etc.
2. Monthly meetings with representatives from other program divisions that will be involved in supporting efforts to implement opportunities (for example, Title I/IIa staff providing funds for professional learning).
3. Regular meetings with finance staff to align support for funding and programmatic changes.

### **Outreach to the field**

This will be an on-going effort. The steps taken so far include:

1. ISL staff attending a meeting with Champlain Valley leadership who are planning a regional response to DMG recommendations.
2. End of January meeting with special education administrators from SU/SDs from initial DMG pilot who are several years into implementation.
3. Meeting scheduled with staff from the statewide interdisciplinary team that provides consultation to school teams about support and programming for students with the most significant needs to learn about the work they are doing to improve literacy skills.

## **Technical Assistance and Professional Learning**

These are first steps to initiate several supports during this school year. Future work will be dependent on what we learn about what is needed by staff in the field.

1. RFP in the works to contract with an organization of individuals to collaborate with stakeholders and develop an early literacy plan as required by Title 16 sec. 2903 (a) (b) (c).
2. RFP to provide regional face-to-face training this spring on high leverage, evidence-based instructional strategies with follow up support in the fall.
3. Technical assistance agreement with WestEd to offer supports to identified groups in making adaptive change using the Leading by Convening approach.

