District Management Council Report

Purpose of Report: To inform the School Board about the dmStaffing software to assist the District in finding efficiencies in developing schedules and allocating FTE for Speech Therapists.

District Priority Area: Fiscal Accountability and Systems Management
Goal 3: Improvement efficiency in systems management
Strategy 3.3: Study and implement related services scheduling with dmStaffing software.

Explanation: The District Management Council (DMC) establishes partnerships with public school District leaders to help them improve student outcomes, operational efficiency, and resource allocation. In observations across the nation, leaders from DMC reported a significant variation in time spent directly with students due to inefficiencies when creating schedules for related services. They proposed to assist the SFSD in establishing criteria for related services, setting expectations for direct services and determining the group size that would ensure both compliance with Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) and improvement in student outcomes.

In March, 2012, SFSD participated in a pilot study, in which caseload data from ten schools was submitted to conduct an analysis of caseloads and service delivery for speech and language services. Results of the pilot study indicated that efficiencies could be created through electronic scheduling. As a result, DMC proposed a systems thinking approach to staffing and scheduling speech therapy services that would reduce costs to the District, improve student outcomes, ensure compliance and create a system of more consistent practices in all schools.

Following this pilot study, District staff worked with DMC to complete further data analysis, collecting caseload data from thirty-six speech therapists between April 30 and May 7, 2012. Findings from this data suggested that changes could be made to address the following:

1. Direct Service Time: Staff spent an average of 50% of the week providing direct service.
2. Caseload distribution: Creating greater equity in distribution of caseloads among therapists.
3. Grouping of Students: To what extent could students be served in a small groups rather than one on one.

District leadership and a group of speech therapists then met with DMC representatives on July 19, 2012, to discuss criteria and set outcomes for creating District guidelines. The criteria and guidelines discussed were:
• Workload versus caseload approach to staffing;
• Target direct service time per week (time spent providing services to students);
• Restricted times that students cannot be pulled from class to receive services;
• Grouping students by area of need;
• Maximum group sizes by areas of need; and
• Grade span limitations for grouping students.

All speech therapists were then brought together in August of 2012 to update them on the process to date, answer questions and respond to concerns. The workload guidelines and grouping criteria suggested by the small committee in July were reviewed. DMC worked with District staff to make changes to staffing patterns to create more efficient and equitable for the 2012-13 school year using these new guidelines but prior to the utilization of the dmStaffing software.

Additional data analysis was then conducted in December of 2012. This analysis allowed DMC to take into account the variability in schedules during the April/May collection due to the end of the year activities. The changes made to attempt to make caseloads more efficient without the use of the software, were also analyzed. Results indicated an increase in direct service time, continued variability in workload, an increase in average caseload of approximately eight students, and more small group therapy sessions in place. Data analysis in both samplings confirmed that direct service time for District speech therapists averaged 50% with a median of 53%. The national median for speech therapists for direct service is 75%.

On May 13, 2013, DMC representatives met with speech therapists and District staff and provided an overview of the scheduling using the software and incorporating the District created guidelines in generating schedules. Speech therapists were given sample schedules to review, process with partners, and provide feedback regarding concerns. These concerns were then prioritized, and included:

• Minimizing the number of therapists per school and minimizing the number of schools each therapist visits;
• Accounting for anticipated growth in early childhood programs;
• Students in substantially separate environments should not be grouped together; and
• Preschool students should not be grouped with elementary students.

The next step was to provide updated information to DMC. Another set of schedules will be developed and reviewed for final input and feedback to DMC. Once final revisions are completed, proposed schedules using the dmStaffing software will be provided to speech therapists by August 1, 2013, prior to the
start of the school year. Speech therapists maintain the flexibility to make changes as needed, based on their professional judgment.

Costs: The partnership with DMC has impacted the budget by reducing a total of 5.3 FTE for the 2012-2013 school year and reducing an additional 2.0 FTE for the 2013-2014 school year. No employees have lost their employment with the District through this process as this reduction has resulted from attrition of therapists through retirement/resignations. The cost of the first year's contract with DMC from April 1, 2012 through March 31, 2013 was $103,800.

Committee Participation: A committee of speech therapists participated in discussion with DMC representatives and a number of focus groups and information sharing sessions have been held to facilitate discussion and gain feedback. Information sharing sessions have also been held with principals to provide an overview of this process and to explain changes they may have experienced with staffing in their buildings.

Summary: The Sioux Falls School District will continue to work with DMC on developing caseload criteria and scheduling to meet the needs of all students receiving speech therapy services.

District Management Council

dmStaffing Software
Findings of Pilot Study 2012

District Management Council proposed that when using the dmStaffing software, SFSD can:

- improve equity between staff members;
- comply with IEP goals;
- create thoughtful groups to meet students needs, and
- ensure that students will not miss restricted time of classroom instruction.
Next Steps

- Small group of Speech and Language Therapists met with DMC representatives on July 19, 2012
- Input was gathered regarding criteria setting outcomes regarding workload and grouping
- SFSD continued to work with DMC to further define the criteria
Creating District Guidelines

- Workload vs. caseload approach to staffing
- Target direct service time per week
- Restricted times that students cannot be pulled from class to receive services
- Grouping students by area of need
- Maximum group sizes by area of need
- Grade span limitations
Workload Criteria

Direct Service Time
Nation median for speech therapist for direct services is 75%
- The district targeted 64% for 2012-2013
- The district will target 70% for 2013-2014

Data analysis showed that direct service time for district speech therapists varied from 30% to 65%, with an average of 50% and a median of 53%.
Workload Criteria

**Maximum Caseload**
- No direct caseload cap
- Follow direct service guidelines

**Restricted Time for Students**
- District will accommodate restricted 90-min. reading blocks at three pilot schools and not pull students from this instructional time
- Specials will not be restricted
Grouping Criteria

**Grouping by area of need**
- All language students can be grouped together
- All articulation students can be grouped together
- Pragmatics students can be grouped with both speech and language students

**Maximum Group Size by area of need**
Oral Language and Articulation
- Ages 0-6; 3
- Ages 7+; 4
Pragmatics
- Group size of 5
Grouping Criteria-Grade Span Guidelines

**Elementary**—grade span of 1, meaning students can only be grouped one grade apart from the other.

**Secondary**—grade span of 2, meaning students can be no more than two grades apart from each other.

**Cluster Classrooms**
Grade span can be greater than 2—
Speech and language staff shared that students within a cluster classroom can be seen in a group together.
May 13, 2013

- DMC created sample schedules developed using the scheduling tool
- Sample schedules were shared with the speech and language therapists for input and feedback
- Feedback will be considered in creating schedules for implementation in 2013-2014
Feedback from Speech and Language Clinicians 5/13/13

- Minimize number of clinicians assigned to each school and the number of schools each clinician serves;
- Account for anticipated growth in early childhood programs;
- Students in substantially separate environments should not be grouped together; and
- Preschool students should not be grouped with elementary students.
Summary

- The Sioux Falls School District will continue to work with DMC on developing caseload criteria and scheduling to meet the needs of all students receiving speech and language therapy services.