

June 1, 2018

Joy Schaefer
Frederick County Public Schools
191 South East Street
Frederick, MD 21701



Dear Ms. Schaefer:

This letter is in response to Element Detail 3c in Work Group 4 (More Resources for At-Risk Students) regarding the Work Group's discussion on May 17th which pertained to the use of tutors to bridge the gap while more reading and math teachers are being trained. The tutors were the stop gap measure to assist students who need literacy and numeracy support in the 3rd grade.

One of the literacy experts in the room informed the Work Group that using tutors was not going to work as a stop gap measure because a tutor would need more intensive training than 10 days to help a struggling reader or mathematician. During this discussion I brought up the idea of apprenticeship as a means of bridging the gap for students who are behind in literacy and numeracy. Dr. Kirwan requested I send in the information I have on the apprenticeship ideas to the work group which is included below and enclosed packet.

The Kirwan Commission calls for providing tutoring to students who are below grade level in reading and math. Looking at data across the state, as many as 60% of the students could be eligible for "tutoring" (more in areas of high poverty). District capacity would be sorely tested to provide high quality interventions. Research-based programs demand that interventionists be "highly trained". There are two approaches of solving this problem.

1. One solution would follow the Reading Recovery model, which would be to identify a great teacher, provide that teacher with advanced training. The advanced training would take about a year and involve instruction, coaching and a practicum. This would provide a credential and increased compensation. This approach is effective but expensive and time-consuming. It also moves highly effective teachers out of the classroom and the work scope would be a small number of students. This won't solve the problem because the reality of the current lack of reading teachers to meet the need and the inability to graduate and train enough teachers to meet the need in the current decade.
2. A different approach would be to train "reading technicians" through a registered apprenticeship program. The "reading technician" would work under the supervision of existing reading teachers and be trained through an apprenticeship program approved by the state. The standards of the apprenticeship program could be developed, registered, delivered and quality assured through the TranZed Apprenticeship Services Company which is operating and approved by Maryland's Department of Labor.

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The "technician" would be trained on one or more of the many researched based reading programs such as Read 180, Corrective Reading, Fountas and Pinnel, etc. The "reading technician" would not be required to have a college degree. The apprenticeship program would screen applicants for the talent to teach reading from a pool consisting of retired people, teachers who are looking for part time work, college students, and graduate students and possibly even high school high school juniors and seniors. Consequently, the cost of the technicians would be half the cost of a highly trained reading specialist.

The flexibility of the applicant body permits students to receive reading help – in school, after school, at home and/or on weekends and under the supervision of a certified reading teacher. An apprentice could be trained to deliver reading recovery in less time than it would take to train a reading teacher under the current system of teacher training because all the technician needs to know are the training techniques of a research based training programs currently available. Estimated training time would be 3 to 6 months. This type of approach to extending the effectiveness and reach of highly trained professions is carried out in the fields of medicine. For example dentists have dental assistants and dental hygienists. Physicians have nurse practitioners, nurses, nursing assistants and LPNs. The key quality issue is assuring the "reading technician" can effectively demonstrate the skill needed to deliver the reading recovery program during training and that the supervising reading teacher continue to quality assure the student's progress from the intervention.

Other benefits of the apprenticeship approach are the addition to add more cultural, gender and racially diverse educators in schools and open up a track that could motivate apprentices to become certified teachers. It is also a way to make use of adults who can speak a second language to help non-English speaking students who have immigrated to the US. Furthermore, apprenticeships are cost-effective when compared to the traditional university approach. Reading technicians could cost half of the cost of providing a certified teacher. Apprenticeships are a time honored, effective approach to teaching that is used and has been used in Europe for many years. (see enclosed brochure on TranZed Apprenticeship Services.

Should you wish any additional information from me please feel free to call me at 410-245-1936 or email me at ross@childrensguild.org.

Sincerely,



Andrew L. Ross, Ph.D., LCSW-C
President & CEO