Working Group 3
College and Career Readiness Pathways

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Working Group 4
More Resources for At-risk Students

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Element Detail 3c (jointly considered by Working Groups 3 and 4)

As a guiding principle, all students who are below proficiency in the foundational skills of literacy and math should receive additional support using a wide variety of evidence-based programs and strategies. The Commission's Preliminary Report called for creating an early warning system as soon as possible based on formative evaluations, including school readiness and other assessments, that enable teachers to identify students who are beginning to fall behind so that teachers work together to get students back on track. This process should be done in all grades. The Preliminary Report also recommended reorganizing schools so that teachers trained to diagnose and address students' learning needs can work collaboratively to monitor students and intervene when they are struggling. Teachers will meet regularly to compare notes on student progress, decide on any needed interventions or additional supports — academic or referral to services— and assign a single teacher to take responsibility for following the student until he or she is back on track.

Element: Transitional tutoring for all K–3rd grade students identified as struggling learners. Transition this role to school teachers as time is freed up and training is added to teacher prep; students who continue to need tutoring beyond third grade should be provided with this support.

As it will take time to put the new system proposed by the Commission in place, it will be necessary to develop a transitional program to address the needs of struggling learners while the systemic approach is being implemented. This will be a transitional program to provide additional academic support through tutoring, using evidence–based programs and strategies, in reading for all students who are significantly behind grade level, with a particular emphasis on bringing students up to proficiency in reading by 3rd grade. (At such time as sufficient resources are available, and if at that time a transitional program is still needed, similar tutoring arrangements should be made for students needing help with math.) Funding will be provided for a lead teacher in each school who will be in charge of the this transitional program. The school will be required to use this special grant money for tutoring but the design of the program will be up to the school so that it can determine how best to address the unique needs of its pupils and to take advantage of local resources. MSDE will be responsible for developing a statewide professional development program for the lead teachers.

Over time, fewer students will need tutoring as teachers are better trained to provide individualized instruction to students that is aligned with CCR standards and State curriculum frameworks. There will always be some students who fall behind but increasingly they will be tutored by their regular teachers as those teachers' time is freed up for such work and as they are trained in diagnosing and addressing learning

difficulties. [See Working Group 2 element on teacher professional development and sufficient time in the school day for this purpose.] Some students will struggle with proficiency in literacy after the transitional program ends (in roughly 6 to 8 years). These students will receive additional supports, which may include tutoring, through the new system discussed above, and a portion of the additional resources recommended for students who are at–risk will be available over the long–term to provide needed supports and services.

Design Assumptions for Transitional Program:

1. As a new system is implemented, school leaders and teachers should be trained in new approaches to supporting students. This will involve three strands of training: for school leaders on the system of supports; for veteran teachers in schools; and for new teachers in preparatory programs on the pedagogy as well as the new system.
2. The special education system will remain in place for students with disabilities, but as more students are supported early, fewer students will need to be referred for special education services.
3. All K–3rd grade students identified by teachers as needing additional support should be provided with it using evidence-based programs and strategies, which should be defined by the Commission (such as meeting Tier 1 or 2 for Evidence–Based Interventions under the Every Student Succeeds Act), and may include (but is not limited to) one–on– one tutoring using certified teachers; tutoring in small groups by a certified teacher, teaching assistant, or other trained individual; and cross–age peer tutoring. Because students in K–2 do not take the PARCC exam, grade 3 PARCC levels will be used as a proxy for estimating resources needed to serve all K–3 students needing addition reading support.
4. The aim of the tutoring is for students to be proficient in reading by the end of 3rd grade. Students can transition out of tutoring support as soon as it is determined they are ready.
5. Priorities should be literacy in grades K–3 (possibly 4 and 5 as well) since literacy is the gateway to academic success. Tutoring in reading will also impact math skills as the ability to read is directly related to math ability. Funds provided through the transitional program may be used to support math tutoring if a local school system determines that it is a priority need of their students. Other available funds may also support math tutoring.
6. As other building blocks recommended by the Commission are implemented (particularly developing teachers with expertise in diagnosing and supporting learning difficulties), the number of students needing tutoring outside of the regular classroom time will decline. It is anticipated that a decrease will begin by year 3 after those building block recommendations are implemented and will level off after 6–8 years.

7. The need for tutoring will not diminish to zero as there will always be some number of students who need this additional support, but after 6–8 years increasingly these students will be tutored by their regular teachers and resources for at–risk students through the at–risk formulas will provide funding for additional supports and services. Overall, through a combination of the compensatory education, concentrated poverty, and categorical tutoring funds recommended by the Commission, resources would be provided that would allow one tutor to serve up to 125 students needing additional reading support. While sufficient resources would be available to provide tutoring in these ratios, a school would have flexibility to employ its own evidence based tutoring models that work for its students.

8. Funds should also be provided for the equivalent of one tutoring coordinator to coordinate the work of up to 11 tutors.

Implementation Considerations:

1. HB 1415, which authorizes funding for evidence–based early literacy intervention in grades K-8 with a priority for K-3rd graders, in a school with a high concentration of students living in poverty has been enacted, so implementation of reading tutors will likely begin this year. The bill mandates $2.5 million in each of fiscal 2019 through 2022 for the program.

2. HB 1415 funding for these interventions expires after fiscal 2022, with a requirement to evaluate the effectiveness of the program at that time. Because tutors are considered a transitional program, needed until teachers have time and capacity to provide this support themselves, HB 1415 funding will have to continue in order to cover the full 6 to 8 years required to fully implement the new forms of school organization and professional development that will make it possible for regular teachers to take over the tutoring function.

Outstanding Issues:

1. Should the funding amount be recalculated every year based on most recent 3rd grade reading proficiency or should the program amount phase–down according to a set schedule (sunset after 8 years)