Equity for All: Effectively Implementing a Student Support Model While Managing Change

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Equity for All: Effectively Implementing a Student Support Model While Managing Change

Doctor of Education Leadership (Ed.L.D.)

Capstone

Submitted by

Monakatellia Ford Walker

To the Harvard Graduate School of Education

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I dedicate this work to…

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Abstract

All students attending public schools should receive the best educational experience no matter their academic, social/emotional and/or physical need. School districts have a responsibility to deliver on the promise of an equitable and excellent education for all students including for those students who require more. Systemic structures, policies and implementation support are required to ensure all students receive what they need to access learning in the least restrictive educational setting.

Research indicates that use of a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework can foster academic growth for students with diverse learning needs (S.R. Jimerson et al., 2016). The MTSS framework identifies Student Support Models as a structure necessary to identify students that need additional support. Full implementation of such structures can be complicated due to the challenges of institutional change. Scott (1994) points out that regulative, cultural-cognitive, and normative forces cause resistance to change within institutions (1994). Schools may be defined as institutions since they are “a relatively stable and legitimated system of interrelated beliefs, values, practices, and structures creating conditions that constrain but also enable particular actions and outcomes… (Bridwell-Mitchell, 2019).”

My capstone explores the redesign and implementation of structures intended to support MTSS implementation and the existing challenges caused by institutional factors. In addition, I examine steps school districts can take to overcome them. Specifically, this capstone provides an analysis of why two structures– the Student Support Team model and District Curriculum and Accommodation Plan– which were intended to deliver necessary support to students in the Revere Public Schools, were not working as intended. This is particularly troublesome because these systems are important to supporting many students including students with disabilities.
Ultimately, I find that successful policy implementation requires specific actions by an organization. Those actions include clear communication of expectations, stakeholder supports to meet those expectations, ongoing assessment and data response efforts and an understanding of change and broader organizational conditions. I found that these factors led to successful policy implementation in the form of consistent use of the district’s student support model and strengthened Tier 1 instruction, which I believe will lead to greater student outcomes in RPS.

To answer the above question, I engaged in a strategic project as a doctoral resident in Revere Public Schools. Specifically, I conducted an analysis of why the current Student Support Team model and the District Curriculum and Accommodation Plan were not being implemented as intended leading to challenges for students with disabilities. In this Capstone, I detail how I explored Revere Public School’s intervention process as established through Building Based Support Teams (BBST) and led a stakeholder group in restructuring and improving the intervention system. I will describe how the stakeholder group centered the redesign of systems and tools needed to improve support for learners while navigating institutional forces. This is largely due to institutional factors. Additionally, I present opportunities and challenges the district will likely encounter during the change process and strategies to support the examination and advancement of organizational practices to better meet student needs.
Introduction

What Does It Take to Provide Equity to All Students?

I am honored to have had the opportunity to lead in the Revere Public Schools (RPS) as part of my residency requirements for the Doctor of Educational Leadership (Ed.L.D.) Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. The Revere Public Schools (RPS) is a small public school district located north of Boston in Revere, MA. It is comprised of eleven schools: six elementary, three middle, one high school and one alternative high school. The district serves just over 7,500 students – 71% of students receive free or reduced lunch and 62% of students are from homes where English is not the primary language spoken. RPS serves students from several races and ethnicities. Most of the student body is composed of students that identify as Hispanic. (See Appendix A.) Through a partnership with The Deeper Dozen Learning and a commitment to living out its mission, RPS has demonstrated a focus on equity.

The RPS mission is currently focused on providing a personalized and meaningful education to all students so that they individually experience superior personal development. To provide a personalized and meaningful education to all students, RPS has committed to engaging members of the educational community in the decision-making process, ensuring rigor and relevance throughout all curricular areas, ensuring positive relationships among all members of the school community, fostering resilience within all members of the school community, and fostering and celebrating innovation throughout the system (https://www.reverek12.org). RPS is facing a few obstacles to achieving its mission. One of these obstacles includes the degree to which it is engaging all learners in receiving their education in the least restrictive environment.

There is much for which the Revere Public Schools should be proud. Its current Superintendent, Dr. Dianne Kelly, was named the MA Superintendent of the Year by the
Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS) in 2023. This distinguished honor is bestowed upon a sitting Superintendent by peers annually, in recognition of their leadership and achievement. Dr. Kelly also received the Women’s Education Leadership Network (WELN) Bobbie D’Alessandro Leadership Award for effective leadership in March 2023. In addition to having a distinguished leader at its helm, in 2018 RPS was recognized for its results with students at the lowest cost. When RPS was compared to other school districts throughout Massachusetts, it was found to be a “community with an incredibly diverse population that gets among the best results at the least cost (BostonGlobe.com, 2018).”

While the Revere Public Schools trumpets these wins—and for good reason-- there are also areas that must be attended to as an organization. Most notably, the district has implemented a specific structure intended to respond to the needs of students that all too often have perpetuated inequity rather than solving for or addressing it as intended. RPS has developed a District Curriculum and Accommodation Plan (DCAP) which is meant to serve as the roadmap for how the district will implement its plan for Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), especially in Tier 1 instruction.

In service of the implementation of the DCAP, RPS draws on the Building Based Support Team (BBST) structure. In short, the BBST, which is similar to the more commonly referred to Student Support (SST) model, is intended to serve as a structure that supports Tier 1 instruction in the general education setting. It is intended to ensure that all students have an opportunity to receive interventions and targeted academic support prior to a special education referral. With few exceptions, in practice, the BBST has functioned as a formality that some staff use as a “check-off” to quickly initiate the special education referral process. This has resulted in the BBST process operating ineffectively throughout the district.
One of the reasons RPS was an attractive residency site for me was because I knew it would provide me with a laboratory for leading an equity agenda at a systems-level. Within the education sector, the question of what it takes to deliver on a promise of equity has guided my professional work and it is much of the focus of districts across many states. Many have created action plans, strategic plans, priorities and more, centered around how to provide children with what they need to improve outcomes and opportunities. Yet, implementation of such plans is much more difficult.

Researcher, author, and champion of students with special needs, Dr. Thomas Hehir (2012), prioritized equity for students with disabilities by focusing on the use of systems and structures to improve the quality of teaching in general education settings (Tier 1 instruction) and by centering the needs of all learners. He emphasized creating high expectations and the importance of students with disabilities learning the same content as their non-disabled peers. In addition to creating a strong Tier 1 environment for all learners, there are other important structures and systems that must exist within schools to ensure that all students are afforded equitable opportunities to attain academic success. My work within Revere Public Schools (RPS) as an Ed.L.D. resident, explored these elements needed to attain outcomes.

Hehir (2012) often writes about “maximizing opportunities to fully participate while minimizing barriers to access” (p. xiii). Inequitable structures and practices must be removed from schools, which requires effective implementation of clear systems and structures. This happens through clear communication, stakeholder support, ongoing data collection and assessment and an understanding of how change and broader organizational conditions contribute to the health of an organization. Without a common understanding of these factors, ineffective systems and structures thrive within organizations. Revere Public School (RPS) is
committed to improving its Tier 1 instruction and to strengthening its systems—namely the Building Based Support Team and its implementation of the District Curriculum and Accommodation Plan. RPS is working to address practices that are no longer as effective as intended. The RPS mission is currently focused on providing personalized and meaningful education to all students so that they individually experience superior personal development. One way the district will attain its mission is through the consistent and coherent use of the BBST and DCAP structures.

Dr. Dianne Kelly is committed to RPS achieving its mission. She has led efforts that engage stakeholders so there is rigor and relevance throughout all curricular areas, she works to build positive relationships among all members of the school community, fosters resilience within all members of the school community and supports innovation throughout the system. Even with all of this work, RPS is facing a few obstacles to achieving its mission. One of the obstacles includes the degree to which it is engaging all learners in receiving their education in the least restrictive environment.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, similar to most school districts, RPS has been working to assess and update practices that are no longer serving students and families. They are working to ensure the vision of the district’s Theory of Change is alive and applicable and that all efforts are centered in equity. The district’s vision of the Theory of Change, is “to foster a system of continuous growth…rooted in four main areas: Rigorous Curricula, Relevant Curricula, Relationships, and Resilience.” The organization’s belief is that providing educators with professional development in these four areas will lead to all students receiving “a personalized and meaningful education so that they individually experience superior and personal development (https://www.reverek12.org).” (See Appendix B)
To fully live out the vision of providing equity for all students, RPS must ensure that all students receive access to teaching and learning opportunities that are personalized, student-centered, culturally responsive, and rich. This requires ensuring Tier 1 instruction is a strong foundation for all and that there are systems in place to anchor and ground practices and efforts. RPS has attempted to do this through a variety of structures and supports including creating a district wide Equity Advisory Board, requiring Equity Plans of each school and instituting Equity Walks across all schools. The purpose is to identify and respond to inequities so that the learning environment meets the needs of all. In addition to these structures, the Building Based Support Team (BBST), and the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP), which are elements of the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework, are used to help identify and meet the academic and social/emotional needs of learners.

Prioritizing a research-based structure such as MTSS is key in effectively identifying student needs and creating a plan to address those needs. Having a structure in place is not enough though. There are institutional forces at play within organizations and those forces can prevent initiatives, structures, and systems from operating in their intended way or even from operating at all. Broader organizational conditions impact the effectiveness of systems and structures and ultimately influence whether policy implementation is successful or not.

During the 2021-2022 school year, key RPS district officials participated in a root cause analysis with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE) which revealed barriers to progress in six areas and resulted in a compliance rating of Partly Implemented, meaning that the requirements were not entirely met in those six key areas of improvement:
❖ Improvement Area SE 7 - Transfer of parental rights at age of majority and student participation and consent at the age of majority
❖ Improvement Area SE 12 - Frequency of Re-evaluation
❖ Improvement Area SE 20 - Least restrictive program
❖ Improvement Area SE 25 - Parental consent
❖ Improvement Area SE 39 - Procedures used to provide services to eligible students enrolled in private schools at private expense
❖ Improvement Area CR 18 - Responsibilities of the School Principal (DCAP and BBST)

A review of RPS documents and staff interviews indicated that although the district developed a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP), as required by the state, it was not consistently implemented to ensure that all efforts have been made to meet the needs of diverse learners in the general education program. Staff interviews indicated that while the district relied on Building-Based Support Teams (BBST), to identify and document appropriate interventions, this was not done consistently across all schools. To support the district in addressing this, MA DESE identified the following district outcome associated with Improvement Area CR 18, which has become a central practice problem for the district:

Revere Public Schools will ensure that the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) and the Building Based Support Team (BBST) interventions are consistently implemented and documented to verify that all efforts have been made to meet the needs of diverse learners in the general education program.
Problem of Practice

Historically, the BBST process has been separate from the Special Education referral process within RPS. Though separate, community members have inextricably connected BBST to the referral process. Rather than viewing the structure as part of the Tier 1 general education program, community members have viewed it as a necessary step to fast-tracking a student to a special education referral (Staff Interview, January 2023). Based on staff interviews I conducted, many staff view the district’s BBST process in this manner because of “unclear expectations about the purpose of the process” and “lack of support” to implement the process.

Based on MA DESE’s assessment, a focus on and development of the DCAP and BBST is essential for equitable access to Tier 1 instruction in Revere. When fully and effectively implemented both structures are meant to function as a support for students in the general education setting. Prior to a Special Education referral, ideally a student would enter a BBST process, where a school-based team is assembled, interventions are identified and attempted for 5-6 weeks, data is collected throughout this time and then the team reassembles to determine if progress has been made and if there is another round of interventions tried or a referral for testing made.

However, in both cases, the district faces a central problem of practice: The District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) is not consistently implemented to ensure that all efforts have been made to meet the needs of diverse learners in the least restrictive setting. The district relies on Building-Based Support Teams (BBST) to identify and document appropriate interventions, but teams are not operating consistently and coherently across the district yet, adversely creating inequitable practices. Throughout the district, this has contributed to the misplacement of students in restrictive settings known as Substantially Separate placements, or
Small Learning Groups, which are intended to meet the academic and social/emotional needs of students and/or to teach life skills to students in need.

The DCAP and BBST are two instrumental structures that, if used as intended, may be impactful and paramount in meeting the needs of learners in the general education setting. Both exist to ensure Tier 1 instruction and support are fully utilized prior to a student recommendation to a more restrictive setting. Identifying why the DCAP and BBST interventions were not fully utilized as intended within RPS was an important aspect of my strategic project because it would reveal how the use or misuse of these structures has contributed to the placement of students in more restrictive settings.

Historically, the efficiency of how BBSTs have operated, has varied school to school. There are barriers each school has faced, and some have created systems and structures to help them move through those barriers and some schools have not. This has led to inconsistent practices across the district that have contributed to the enrollment of students into the district’s Substantially Separate program.

My strategic project sought to identify what the BBST structure is, how it operates and to assess its effectiveness. After conducting several interviews with school leaders, district leaders, Special Education staff, BBST team members and leaders, I confirmed DESE’s findings. The BBST structure was not consistently used across the district and operation varied from school to school. The original intended process was not always used. One reason offered for this is what many social theorists describe as the decoupling that happens between espoused structures and actual practice within institutions. Essentially, lack of clarity around purpose and practice can lead to this.
In the pages that follow, I will review how the use of former and current practices in RPS related to the DCAP and BBST implementation, have impacted structures in place in the district. I will outline a proposal for addressing the inequities that exist due to inconsistent use of structures. I will also examine what is required to create conditions for change within an organization and the institutional factors that impact change. This Capstone will glean from literature centered around Institutional Analysis, the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support framework, Kotter’s 8 Stages of Change and elements of a SST framework. I will share the implications of this work on my own leadership, the work of Revere Public Schools and the greater education sector.

**Review of Knowledge for Action**

In this review of knowledge for action, I will address three key areas of knowledge that provide insight on the practice problem, contextualize my theory of action, and provide a conceptual framework for interpreting the work of my strategic project and its outcomes. First, I provide historical context of policies that have led to the SST structure in schools across America and share elements of SST models that schools should consider when addressing student achievement concerns. Next, I describe what sustainability within RPS may look like through a renewed focus on Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS). Then, I consider the challenges of implementing such systems by offering context about why change is so difficult to attain within organizations through the lens of Institutional Theory. In doing so, I also explore the impact of relational trust and community engagement on institutions.

**Historical Context and Overview of Student Support Team Policies**

In 2015, President Barack Obama signed the *Every Student Succeeds Act* into law. ESSA reauthorized the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) and replaced
the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). Included in the law are provisions to help ensure improved outcomes for students receiving elementary and secondary education (https://www.doe.mass.edu/federalgrants/essa/). ESSA requires state educational agencies seeking funding to create a state plan naming its vision for various areas as it “…relates to college and career readiness including but not limited to implementation of standards, assessments, and accountability and assistance programs (https://www.doe.mass.edu/federalgrants/essa/).”

As required by ESSA, Massachusetts identified state strategies and connections to ESSA to close student achievement gaps and meet the goal of attaining success for every student that attends a Massachusetts public school. State Strategy 4, “Turn around the lowest performing districts and schools,” includes elements that directly link to meeting the needs of students who receive special education services. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education proposes using the following four evidence-based strategies, which research shows have been used by many schools that moved out of turnaround status:

❖ Establish a school-wide community of practice through leadership, shared responsibility, and professional collaboration.
❖ Employ intentional practices for improving instruction.
❖ Provide student-specific supports and instruction to all students.
❖ Provide appropriate social, emotional, and behavioral supports in order to create a safe, orderly, and respectful learning environment for students and teachers.

Source: https://www.doe.mass.edu/federalgrants/essa/stateplan/execsum.docx
District Curriculum Accommodation Plans (DCAPs)

Chapter 71, Section 38Q1/2 Curriculum Accommodation Plan, of the Massachusetts General Law, states that all school districts within Massachusetts are required to create a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP). “... a school district shall adopt and implement a curriculum accommodation plan to assist principals in ensuring that all efforts have been made to meet students' needs in regular education. The plan shall be designed to assist the regular classroom teacher in analyzing and accommodating diverse learning styles of all children in the regular classroom and in providing appropriate services and support within the regular education program... (https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71/Section38Q1~2).” DCAP may be viewed as a product of DESE’s evidence-based strategy, “Provide student-specific supports and instruction to all students.”

Student Support Teams (SSTs)

Historically, Student Support or Success Teams (SSTs) have operated as a structure comprised of stakeholders in a school community that assemble to review progress of students and create a response plan to support students in need. Student Support or Success Teams play an important role in the implementation of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) as illustrated in Figure 1. This figure demonstrates how the MTSS framework is comprised of three tiers. Various interventions are identified at each tier, including SSTs.
RPS has prioritized using a Student Support model, which it refers to as Building Based Support Teams (BBST). The model centers most of Berta et al.’s (2022) 4 steps in creating a successful SST: Early Identification, Assessment, Developing a Plan and Follow-Up. (The Assessment step varies by school.) The BBST functions like a Student Support Team model in that a body of stakeholders assemble to create an academic plan of action to support a student. A student enters the BBST process, which is led by a teacher within the building, interventions are identified and attempted for 5-6 weeks, data is collected throughout this time and then the team reassembles to determine if progress has been made. Then a determination is made by the team to continue providing interventions or make a special education referral. See Figure 2 or more information:
DCAP FLOWCHART: What is the process for identifying and addressing the needs of regular education students?

Student is having difficulty in school with: Academics, Executive Functioning/Organization, Communication, and/or Social Emotional or Behavioral Functioning

- Refer for special education evaluation (e.g., parent request)
- OR
- Refer to BBST

Special Education Dept creates an Evaluation Consent Form. Modified BBST process begins.

Gather information
- Learn about student's cultural background and history
- Consult with student, family members, school nurse, social worker, and other teachers/school personnel who work with the student
- Review assessment data and current work

Describe Student's Learning Profile
- Strengths and areas of need. Refer to identification checklist
- Observe frequency and intensity of issue in different settings
- Note student's work habits, organization style, etc.

Assess Progress in Curriculum Areas
- Collect Data: classroom work samples, assessments, screening forms, etc.

Choose Strategies and Implement for Student Accommodation Plan
- Choose from “Supports for General Education Classroom Teachers”
- Implement for 5 to 6 weeks

If student is found not eligible but requires accommodations and/or strategies

Develop and implement interventions, monitor progress

Student performance improves
- Continue interventions and monitor progress
- Student performance improves

Student continues to struggle
- Adjust strategies and track
- Refer for evaluation

Figure 2. RPS DCAP Model

DCAP and SST structures are ways to address concerns about student achievement. DCAP is one way that the state intervened to try to improve student outcomes. Creating these structures is not enough. The implementation of these structures is just as important as the
structures themselves. As the case study from Norway demonstrates, implementing systems and structures with fidelity and constantly assessing efforts, is crucial.

**Sustainability Through a Renewed Focus on Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)**

**RtI and MTSS**

The 2004 reauthorization of IDEA “provided schools with the opportunity to use a student’s response to evidence-based instruction as a method for identifying students eligible for and in need of special education services (Jimerson, et al., pg. 47).” RTI is a model used to identify students experiencing academic and behavior challenges. Components of the RTI framework include offering a *universal screening, progress monitoring and evidence-based instruction* for all students. (See Appendix L) The provision allowed for RTI to be used as part of the student learning eligibility identification process. Many school districts prioritize RTI as a strategy to meet the academic needs of students. MTSS is a more current approach that provides a similar frame to review student progress, but from a general education perspective.

Within education there has been a shift in prioritizing MTSS. Response to Intervention (RTI) was developed from Special Education law. Multi-Tiered Systems of Support was developed with a focus on general education. “RtI is assessment oriented, but MTSS emphasizes providing services. Both rely on screening all students, providing tiered interventions, monitoring student progress, and using a problem-solving framework, but MTSS has a more explicit focus on general education (S.R. Jimerson et al., 2016).” Prioritizing use of a student-centered framework such as MTSS across all schools in RPS, will support the district in attaining its goal of equity for all students.
Centering Berta et. al’s 4 elements of a Student Support Team framework is an important aspect of MTSS implementation. These 4 elements include:

❖ Constantly examine past special education practices and the impact on current structures.

❖ Strengthen Tier 1 instruction (by using the DCAP prior to a BBST referral).

❖ Constantly assess and refine Tier 1 instruction and systems that are intended to support student achievement, including MTSS.

❖ Use accountability structures to support teaching and learning such as observation, feedback, and coaching.

When RPS engages in reflection of its implementation of both the BBST and DCAP structures by using these 4 elements as a tool to measure progress, it will strengthen efforts to attain greater student achievement in the general education setting. When considering the most effective ways to meet the needs of learners with special needs in the least restrictive environment, RPS may learn lessons from Norway which prioritized MTSS for all students.

Norway, while a vastly different country than the United States, provides some insight for Revere based on a major research study centered around better understanding the environmental conditions of students receiving special education services and how that impacts student achievement rates. By way of overview, the study found that attempts to ensure that students receive their educational needs outside of the special education setting are best. Norway prioritized MTSS, which led to increased student achievement of students with and without special needs.
Norway Study

Similarly, to the United States, Norway uses the term special education to describe students who have differing abilities in reading, writing and math. These needs of students may be related to individual characteristics or environmental risk factors (Cook, et al., 2014). Students may also have learning, psychological, relational, or behavioral challenges. Students who do not meet specific learning outcomes from the general education setting are entitled to special needs services. From 1990 on, special education in Norway, restructured and reformed and had a “strong emphasis on decentralization… (Cook, et al., 2014).” New provisions addressed the content and organization of special needs programs as well as teacher qualifications. There were also “individualized and inclusive-oriented differentiation measures” included.

Adapted education, which is not special education, means that the learning environment should meet the individual student's qualifications and needs. The purpose of the adaptation is to make schools “better equipped to include the range of abilities and backgrounds represented by the diversity of children and youth (Cook, et al., 2014).” Adapted education may include use of various learning strategies, teaching methods, content, program and/or different ways of organizing education. In U.S. public education, this is known as differentiated instruction which may be viewed as an element of MTSS. In Norway, it is believed that adapting the general education to student needs should decrease the need for special education. This belief exists within the U.S. public education system as well.

“Adapted teaching in heterogeneous classes should aim at striking a good balance between individual and collective needs and teachers should introduce a variety of learning tasks, learning content, working methods, teaching materials, and grouping of students (Cook, et al.,
2014).” This approach supports the prioritization of Tier 1 instruction within public education. Ensuring that all efforts are made in the general education setting to meet the needs of the learners is a strategy that is impactful. RPS’s BBST structure is intended to serve this same purpose: ensure that students have an opportunity to receive their education in the least restrictive setting.

Norway Improvement Strategies

Amid Norway working to identify the best way to meet the needs of students with special needs, they introduced three improvement strategies offering key lessons to RPS around improving its student support model.

Identify-Follow-Up. This strategy was centered around strengthening early intervention for students who struggled with learning. Institutions were charged with improving routines for identifying students in need of support and following up with the students in need by being intentional about what was provided in the learning environment, providing adaptive education, and providing early intervention.

Target-oriented Qualifications and Improved Learning Outcomes. This strategy was centered around providing more specialized and targeted competencies. This included embedding educational and psychological counseling services and classroom assistance.

Cooperation and Coordination, and Better Implementation. The third strategy was centered around the premise of ensuring “good access to comprehensive special education assistance.” This was improved through better coordination of services and resources. (Cook et al, p.222, 2014).” It was concluded that students with special needs who received their education
in non-special education settings achieved better grades than students that attended “special
education classes” (Cook et al, p.224, 2014).

A major finding from this study was that students who were differently abled, had been
included in the general education setting and provided with additional support to meet their
needs, fared well. These students reported experiencing school more favorably as well as their
peers. RPS strengthening its Tier 1 instructional program with a similar approach can lead to
innovation and student achievement within general education. It can provide a roadmap to
inclusion. However, full implementation and consistent use is necessary to realize these positive
outcomes.

**Elements of Student Support Team Models that Center Student Achievement**

In “Developing Your School’s Student Support Teams…,” authors Berta, Blonsky, and
Wogan name 4 major steps in creating successful Student Support Teams. They recommend
utilizing a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework to determine when to use a
Student Support Team. The MTSS framework prioritizes identifying levels of interventions
needed for students. Schools use the MTSS framework to identify resources and an action plan to
support students. The work that RPS has been engaged in around BBST and DCAP
implementation, has the potential to be deeply impactful work. Berta and colleagues., identify 4
important steps when considering a student support model: *Early Identification, Assessment,
Developing a Plan and Follow-Up* (Berta, et al., pg. XIV, 2022). See **Figure 3.** These steps are
seen in Revere’s BBST model but not consistently implemented as I will discuss below. RPS has
experienced challenges to full implementation of the DCAP. This along with inconsistent use of
the BBST structure, have contributed to concerns around how students have been afforded
opportunities to receive their education in the least restrictive setting.
Implementing Special Education Policy

Ensuring strong core instruction is crucial to meeting the needs of all students. “In the absence of high-quality core instruction, proportions of children requiring additional support may rise considerably, straining school resources and potentially making intervention delivery and management infeasible (Burns, pg. 13, 2010).” If core instruction is not high-quality and structured to meet individual student needs, then meeting the diverse needs of learners in the general education setting is unattainable.

Of the many students referred to special education assessment throughout the United States, the majority “…are for the suspicion of a Learning Disability, one of the twelve “disabling” conditions included in the Federal Special Education law (Berta et al, pg. 92, 2022).” Berta et al. prioritizes using an SST model that includes a team of providers assembling to identify interventions and strategies to support students. They assert that the needs of many
students referred for special education assessment would decrease if this model were used consistently across schools. Lack of consistency may be attributed, in part, to unclear systems and structures that support implementation. Yet, lack of consistency can also be attributed, in part, to the complexities of change management, especially in institutions.

**Change and Institutional Analysis**

Change within organizations is typically a monumental task that many attempt but few attain. Once most begin to encounter the throes and complexities that come with leading change (i.e., pushback, conflict, etc.), many often become weary and even retreat. John Kotter’s 8 Steps for Leading Change and 4 Change Principles helps us understand the stages of strategic change. Institutional Analysis offers a frame from which one can understand why change within institutions is so challenging and difficult to attain. It provides a lens from which we may analyze how institutions work. (See Appendix C)

**Kotter’s Strategic Change Framework**

Using a tool of reflection to guide where RPS is in the process of change will allow the district to analyze its improvement efforts and continue to assess progress. John Kotter’s 8 steps to Change framework will support these efforts. Each step will allow district leaders to improve their practice in supporting building leaders and teachers in assessing whether the BBST and DCAP structures are serving their intended purposes. The framework also supported my leadership in RPS. (See Figure.)

In 2021, John Kotter released his 8 Accelerators and the 4 Change Principles framework to enhance his original 8 Steps of Change framework. (See Figure 5) Largely in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and new challenges facing organizations, this updated framework provides
a new vision for how to build new behaviors and ways of working and sustaining a new vision. It highlights the importance of the 8 steps in the change process in addition to 4 change principles and how when combined, an innovative network is formed and ready to take advantage of the next opportunity. (Kotter, 2018). The 4 change principles may be interpreted as part of a larger roadmap to successful BBST and DCAP implementation for RPS. (See Figure 5 below.)

**Figure 4. Kotter's 8 Steps to Change**

While a framework for strategic change is essential it does not provide a comprehensive conceptual framework for change in organizations that are not merely organizations but also institutions, as is the case with public schools. Institutional Analysis provides a lens from which one may assess how *structures, behaviors of others* and *social orders*, which I and organizational researchers refer to as institutions, interact and function. This, in turn, makes it possible to better understand why change within institutions is so challenging and difficult to attain.
Institutional Analysis and Change

Social Theorist, W. Richard Scott, helps us understand how institutions have forces at play that contribute to how people operate and how decisions are made. “There are fundamental forces undergirding institutions, related to how people think, how they form their social identities, and how they understand and advance their own interests (Scott, 2013).” In further explaining how institutions function, Harvard Graduate School of Education’s Professor Ebony Bridwell-Mitchell (2022), has emphasized that the forces Scott (2013) identifies tend to reproduce and reinforce status quo beliefs, practices, and structures.

Relatedly, Bridwell-Mitchell (2019) explains how “organizational operations and outcomes are explained by actors’ legitimacy concerns (2019)”, meaning what is considered desirable, proper, or appropriate given underlying institutional forces (Suchman, 1995). The concerns help us understand institutional processes. The three forces or pillars of institutions – ideas, identities, and interests (Scott, 2013) – in addition to the legitimacy pressures they impose,
are helpful for dissecting how the innerworkings of institutions support or prohibit change within organizations. In other words, Institutional Analysis offers a frame from which to view the complexities of change within organizations.

**Three Pillars of Institutions**

There are three underlying forces or pillars of institutions: *Cultural-Cognitive, Normative and Regulative*. Social theorist W. Richard Scott, refers to these pillars as “…central building blocks of institutional structures, providing the elastic fibers that guide behavior and resist change… (Scott, 2014).” Within RPS and all organizations, people are navigating these pillars, whether explicitly or implicitly. (See Error! Reference source not found.)

### Table 9.1 The three pillars of institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basis of legitimacy</th>
<th>Regulative pillar</th>
<th>Normative pillar</th>
<th>Cultural-cognitive pillar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basis of order</td>
<td>Legally sanctioned</td>
<td>Morally governed</td>
<td>Culturally supported, comprehensible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basis of compliance</td>
<td>Regulative rules and resultant resources</td>
<td>Binding expectations of social groups</td>
<td>Constitutive schema and scripts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basis of legitimacy</td>
<td>Expedience, pragmatism</td>
<td>Social obligation and desirability</td>
<td>Taken-for-granted, shared understandings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanisms</td>
<td>Coercive</td>
<td>Normative</td>
<td>Mimetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logics</td>
<td>Self-interest, instrumentality</td>
<td>Appropriateness</td>
<td>Orthodoxy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicators</td>
<td>Rules, laws, sanctions</td>
<td>Certification, approval, membership</td>
<td>Common beliefs, meanings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affect</td>
<td>Fear, deprivation</td>
<td>Shame, honor, pride</td>
<td>Certainty, confusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Adapted from Table 3.1 in Scott, 2008.*

**Figure 6 Bridwell-Mitchell's adaptation of Scott’s three pillars model**

The *Regulative Pillar* refers to the regulative aspects of an institution. This includes rules for establishments and conformity measures and rewards and punishments as necessary, to influence behavior. Within the education context, this may look like national and state
regulations requiring school districts to create systems (BBST, DCAP, etc.) and connecting funding opportunities to the use of those systems.

The *Normative Pillar* emphasizes rules that center around prescription, evaluation, and obligation. “Normative systems include both values and norms. Some values apply to all, and others apply to only a selected few, leading to the establishment of roles, “conceptions of appropriate goals and activities for particular individuals or specified social positions (Scott, 2014).” In organizations, new initiatives, structures, and ways of being are constantly being challenged by the norms within an organization. The norms that people abide by are often tied to social obligations people feel must be met, to keep things status quo.

Oftentimes in organizations when the normative pillar is at play, you may hear statements like “we have always done it this way.” This pull to do things the way it’s always been done is tied to perceptions of behaviors and actions that have been legitimized, whether formally or informally within organizations. This legitimizing may serve as a stamp of approval. This pillar is central to why change in organizations is often stalled. I witnessed this pillar at play when interviewing community members about the challenges associated with the BBST and DCAP structures. Many interviewees attributed the district’s current struggles with an unwillingness to change past practices. For example, some stated “key community members do not possess positional authority to enforce policy.” They attributed this to serving as a barrier to combatting an existing belief that staff will “do things the way they have always been done.”

The *Cultural-Cognitive Pillar* refers to “…the centrality of cultural-cognitive elements of institutions: the shared conceptions that constitute the nature of social reality and create the frames through which meaning is made (Scott, 2014).” This pillar is currently playing itself out within RPS. There is low turnover from year to year within the district. Oftentimes, vacancies
are filled from within. When this is a reality within organizations, it’s easier for common beliefs or shared understandings to be persuasive throughout. This form of legitimacy, as Bridwell-Mitchell states, is crucial to understanding “…how institutions work – or how the people in them do their work.

*Change as a Threat to Legitimacy*

There are many reasons why the threat of change may exist within education. Self-efficacy is defined as “…a psychological construct that deals with an individual’s belief about capabilities to learn or perform educational activities at designated levels (Khine & Nielsen, 2022).” Self-efficacy, rooted in social cognitive theory, influences effort and motivation. Within education, this may appear as an educator internalizing change as a response to something they may or may not have done wrong or as them not being good enough.

Another reason why change may be viewed as a threat is due to concerns about legitimacy or what social theorist, Mark Suchman, defines as, “…a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions (Suchman, 1995).” Within many educational settings, including RPS, the role of legitimacy plays out in the spreading of new ideas being limited and the traditional ways in which systems, structures and institutions are approached pervading. This is due to behaviors, beliefs and actions that have been legitimized by people within organizations.

*Legitimacy as a Lever*

Legitimacy helps one understand why organizational structures exist. As Suchman (1995) explains, legitimacy is socially constructed and reflects a harmonization “…between the
behaviors of the legitimated entity and the shared (or assumedly shared) beliefs of some social group; thus, legitimacy is dependent on a collective audience, yet independent of particular observers (Suchman, 1995).” In a social situation, this may appear as someone identifying a certain behavior or action as legitimate. A group of observers may accept behavioral patterns, even if there are individual reservations about those behaviors. In other words, people have an idea about what they think others view as desirable, proper, and appropriate. So, people try to behave in ways that match what they think others deem to be legitimate even if they themselves do not necessarily agree with what others deem legitimate.

Importantly, there are three types of legitimacy, pragmatic, moral and cognitive. Each includes a perception or assumption that within a socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions, activities within an organization are desirable, proper, or appropriate. Each type of legitimacy has a different behavioral dynamic attached. As described by Suchman, pragmatic legitimacy is support for policy within an organization based on the expected value to constituents and self-interest of the organization’s immediate audience. Moral Legitimacy considers whether an activity is “the right thing to do.” It considers the approval of social groups. Cognitive legitimacy considers the role of comprehensibility and taken-for-grantedness in legitimation. Comprehensibility grapples with the portrayal of the social world “as a chaotic cognitive environment” where participants work to name their experiences coherently. Taken-for-grantedness considers how institutions manage disorder and transform it into what Suchman refers to as “givens” which function in a manner that submerges the possibility of dissent (1995). It is when social structure is removed from the control of actors who created it.

Understanding the role of legitimacy within organizations is crucial to addressing the barriers to change that exist. The pervasiveness of behaviors and actions that have the perception
of legitimacy can significantly impact the work of an organization. Using this as a lever to change will better position organizations to lead change.

**Impact of Relational Trust and Community Engagement on Institutions**

James Coleman's theory of social capital describes how the nature of relationships play a key role in a wide range of social and behavioral phenomena. He describes social capital and human capital as “intangible and abstract and accumulated for productive ends.” Human capital “is acquired through education and social capital develops around sustained social interactions (Bryk & Schneider, 2004d).” He names how the role of relational ties connect to trustworthiness and how trust includes an interaction where one decides whether to engage in an action with another or not. This interaction is important and plays a role in how each decides to trust another. If this interaction is absent, personal reputations or social similarities may be relied on. Trust includes motivations, which in some cases may be self-serving. “Relational trust views the social exchanges of schooling as organized around a distinct set of role relationships…” where each has an understanding and expectations of roles. Synchronization of each of these roles is required as well as expectations being validated by actions.

The act of building relationships and trust is important and intentional, especially when leading change. When relational trust is strong, reform initiatives are more likely to be engaged in by school participants and then successfully diffused across an organization. (Bryk & Schneider, 2004d) This was crucial to the success of my strategic project and the theory of action motivating the work.
Theory of Action

Incorporating Berta, et al.’s (2022) 4 elements of a Student Support Team framework and Norway’s 3 Improvement Strategies is critical to how RPS institutes a Student Support Team model that prioritizes consistent DCAP use across the district. Incorporating the Berta, et al.’s (2022) four elements and Norway’s 3 improvement strategies, in turn, requires both strategic and institutional change and so using Kotter’s 8 Steps to Change framework along with elements of Institutional Theory to support examination of organizational practices and better understand its challenges and how to respond to them. However, the district must also attend to teachers’ individual and collective self-efficacy beliefs when implementing changes as well.

When RPS uses accountability structures focused on key instructional areas to support teaching and learning, it will improve the teaching and learning environments for all. Structuring teaching observations, providing feedback and coaching around key areas, identified by BBST themes will improve instructional practices. For example, BBST team leaders, whose role will be more clearly defined later in this writing, engaging in monthly professional learning opportunities that are centered around themes that emerge from the BBST meetings, will allow the leads to better support their peers and establish a professional learning community.

Based on my analysis of the needs of RPS, learning and reflections from the RKA, findings about the RPS context, and the desired student outcomes and opportunities, I developed a theory of action for accomplishing the goals of the strategic project.

If I:

➢ Collect accurate information about current BBST and DCAP systems, structures, and practices in place throughout the district.
➢ Establish trust with community members to develop an understanding of RPS culture and context.

➢ Collaborate with stakeholders from across the district to redesign the BBST process while attending to principles of change management and acknowledging the threat of change.

➢ Create an implementation plan that centers Berta, et al.’s 4 steps of an effective SST, improvement strategies, and understandings of strategic and institutional change.

Then:

➢ RPS will have a roadmap for effectively monitoring Tier 1 practices that meet the needs of learners.

So that:

➢ Every opportunity for students to receive their education in the least restrictive setting is maximized.

**Strategic Project Description**

Findings from the MA DESE Tiered Focus Monitoring Review (TFMR) in addition to findings from interviews conducted with community members from Revere Public Schools, highlighted Special Education in Revere Public Schools as an area needing improvement.

Specific areas included improving district use of the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan and Building Based Support Team implementation. My Strategic Project prioritized exploring DCAP and BBST implementation by analyzing district structures, collecting accurate information about those structures, collaborating with stakeholders, analyzing how internal and external factors impact whether structures can operate as intended or not and creating an implementation plan that includes monitoring and addressing change within organizations.
Establishing trust with community members to develop an understanding of RPS culture and context

To learn about Revere and accurately identify a problem of practice, I engaged in a 3-month listening tour. This listening tour included embedding myself in the community as much as possible, interviewing school leaders, staff, and families and conducting focus groups. This allowed me to learn why the community was so special to the people that lived and worked within it, and it enabled me to hear directly from the stakeholders about areas that needed improvement. It was through this process, that I learned about the common themes surrounding special education within RPS. I walked the neighborhoods in Revere to get a feel for the community, to observe and listen. This was important to me because although I was a lifelong resident of Boston, I was unfamiliar with Revere. It was important for me to gain a sense of the community as I attempted to embed myself in it and build trust. As I learned about the city of Revere, it became apparent to me how tight knit the community was. Many who resided in the city, had grown up in Revere or had deep ties to the city. This was evident within the school district as well. Many employees had been there for several years and/or had family members that worked within the district currently or in the past as well. Several employees even attended the school district. I found that this strong connection resulted in a deep pride many had for the city. Having this context was important to me because it would help me understand the community, tap into the desire people have to make improvements, build trust with stakeholders and identify possible challenges I may experience.

I engaged in a 3-month listening tour before identifying my strategic project. This listening tour included embedding myself in the community as much as possible and interviewing school leaders, staff, and families. This allowed me to learn more about why the community was so special to the people that lived and worked within it, and it enabled me to
hear directly from the stakeholders about areas that needed improvement. It was through this process, that I learned about the common themes surrounding special education within RPS. It was important for me to gain a sense of the community as I attempted to embed myself in it and build trust. As I learned about the city of Revere, it became apparent to me how tight knit the community was. Many resided in the city, who had grown up in Revere or had deep ties to the city. This was evident within the school district as well. Most employees had been there for several years and/or had family members that worked within the district. Several employees even attended the school district. I found that this strong connection resulted in a deep pride many had for the city. Having this context was important to me because it would help me understand the community, tap into the desire people have to make improvements, build trust and also identify possible challenges I may experience.

**Collecting Accurate Information about RPS Practices**

I began the data collection process by conducting interviews with multiple stakeholders throughout the RPS community. I met with school leaders, district administrators, central office staff, school-based staff, and leaders within the Special Education department. To collect the most accurate data, I prioritized building relationships and trust with the members of the community. I did this by visiting schools during the summer, volunteering in schools, attending leadership team meetings with district administrators and attempting to have as many touch points with community members as possible. This allowed me to engage in authentic experiences with people which led to people sharing their real experiences with the BBST process.

**Reintroducing the DCAP**

To assess DCAP use and implementation within the district, I surveyed and interviewed various stakeholders within RPS. As a result of interview findings with stakeholder
groups and district leaders, it was revealed that not all classroom teachers, school leaders and other instructional staff, knew what the DCAP was, expectations for use of it or how to access it. The tool had become non-existent in many schools, and some had forgotten about it.

I responded to this by co-constructing a training with Assistant Superintendent of Pupil Services, Dr. Richard Gallucci. This training was to be delivered to the Educational Teacher Leaders (ETLs) and then all school-based staff. The intent was that the 10 ETLs, who led the special education process in schools, would provide this same training to staff in each of the 11 schools, to refocus teaching efforts on providing intervention support to students and strengthen Tier 1 teaching and learning in the general education setting. We used a train-the-trainer model to reintroduce this work and introduce it as an expected part of Tier 1 instruction. After all ETLs participated in this training, each reported to their respective school communities and delivered the training to staff. Over 90% of school-based staff received this training.

I observed the ETLs provide this professional development session to school-based staff, and it was successful. Based on feedback received from participants, the training provided staff with important tools and resources to support efforts to meet the needs of students. Participants explored how they could access and use the DCAP prior to the BBST process. I observed participants discuss how helpful this training was and some shared that they “forgot the DCAP resource existed” (teacher in RPS). I also heard participants stating how the interventions in the DCAP were “good teaching practices that should be used in and out of the BBST process.”

Prior to the training, teachers had a hard time accessing the DCAP document. I led efforts to allow for more easy access to the document via the district’s website, as well as made edits to the document, so it was more user-friendly. Assistant Superintendent Dr. Gallucci and I made changes to the DCAP, updated the reporting tool that teachers used to indicate concerns around
student achievement and performance and translated it into multiple languages, so it was more easily accessible to families. We clarified what data should be collected and where the data should be tracked. We also made changes to the data collection form and clarified how to use some of the interventions.

After the DCAP training, I began to work on assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of the Building Based Support Team process and its role in ensuring students have an opportunity to receive their education in the least restrictive setting.

**Collaborating with Stakeholders to Redesign the BBST Process**

I assembled a BBST Working Group to assess the DCAP and BBST structures and learn more about the implementation. I worked to create a description of the BBST Working Group, and this was shared with the whole district. (See Appendix E.) I received a total of 21 inquiries and all 21 people were invited to join the BBST Working Group. The 21 stakeholders represented a variety of roles within the district and a diverse number of years of service. (See Appendix G.)

The BBST Working Group conducted a review of the Building Based Team Support process and explored the impact of the current system on Special Education within the district. We completed a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis to inform our work. (See Appendix F) We also undertook a data analysis process of reviewing grades, assessments and teacher observational notes from the start and middle of the year to determine progress of students that participated in the BBST process.
Creating an Implementation Plan Centering the Refined BBST Process, Revised DCAP & Supports for Change:

As a result of my observations of BBST meetings, review of the DCAP, interviews with multiple stakeholders and leading the BBST Working Group, a set of recommendations were developed and presented to Superintendent Dr. Dianne Kelly in March 2023. These recommendations were part of an Implementation Plan that will be provided to RPS in the spring. The Implementation Plan will account for the current context of the district and the district wide goal of centering equity.

Analysis of the impact of the BBST process determined that schools used various metrics to identify students that would participate in the BBST process. This was a crucial finding of my project because information from staff interviews revealed concerns about inconsistent data being used to determine student placement in special education settings.

This review led to preliminary recommendations for improvement centered around admittance criteria, strengths of the program and areas of growth and the identification of metrics teams use to determine when a restrictive setting is no longer needed.

My Strategic Project also focused on building the capacity of the Special Education Department through co-developing staff trainings with the Co-Directors of Special Education and Assistant Superintendent of Student Services that supported the leadership development of the Special Education Team. Trainings focused on DCAP implementation and requirements outlined in the MA DESE Tiered Focused Monitoring Review Report. I co-facilitated monthly meetings with the Co-Directors and Assistant Superintendent of Student Services focused on team building and the introduction of systems and structures such as meeting agendas that lead to more ownership and oversight around district compliance needs, state mandates, district wide
special education-related issues and student development and progress.

Through the work of my strategic project, I ultimately sought answers to six key questions to collect and assess evidence related to my theory of action.

❖ What is the vision for how the BBST structure operates?
❖ Why is the vision currently not being realized throughout the district?
❖ What structural challenges exist?
❖ What systemic challenges exist?
❖ What adaptive and/or technical issues exist and how has inconsistent use of the DCAP and BBST structures contributed?
❖ What tools do stakeholders require to implement change?

Evidence

In this section, I summarize evidence demonstrating the results of my strategic project and how I solved the problem of practice. I also provide evidence of my theory of action working as planned, an analysis of how my efforts will improve DCAP and BBST use and a roadmap for effectively monitoring practices to improve Tier 1 instruction within the district.

My theory of action, evidence and ongoing analysis of the work led to three emergent goals on which my strategic project ultimately focused. Each goal related to the theory of action. Goal 1 connected to collecting accurate information about structures in place. Goal 2 led to appropriate improvement strategies being identified. Goal 3 led to the creation of the district’s Implementation Plan. Each goal was met, leading to observable improvement in systems and structures for the district.
Goal 1: Co-Develop a DCAP training with the Directors of Special Education and Assistant Superintendent of Student Services.

This goal was successfully met. The DCAP was a tool underutilized throughout the district and in some cases, many did not know how to access the document. The training I co-led prioritized gathering information on how the DCAP was being used across the district. It also provided consistent expectations for how to use the DCAP to identify specific student needs, document intervention use, and how to progress monitor and ensure all efforts have been made to meet the needs of learners in the general education setting. This training was provided to 100% of the special education team facilitators and about 90% of general education teachers, special education teachers, related service providers, and building administrators in RPS. Feedback from this training indicated that most participants would now begin utilizing the DCAP and most found the training helpful.

I co-led the process of making the DCAP a user-friendly tool for the greater RPS community. I worked closely with the Assistant Superintendent of Pupil services and the RPS website manager to make the tool accessible from the district’s main webpage. (See Appendix I.) This was important because feedback from the community indicated that many did not know how to access the document. In addition to making it more accessible, I co-led a training for Special Education staff who then trained their respective school communities on DCAP use and implementation. (See Appendix J.) Feedback from these sessions indicated that the training was well-received by participants. Most found the sessions helpful.
Goal 2: Conduct a review of the Building Based Support Team process by analyzing current BBST structures in place within the district.

This goal was successfully met. It was centered around gathering information to assess the systems and structures associated with the Building Based Support Team process. This review was designed to determine and assess strengths, areas for growth, analyze student data and review progress monitoring systems.

BBST Leads and I conducted interviews with members of the community to learn about the BBST process, expectations, strengths, and areas for improvement. Interviews were conducted with school based BBST teams, school principals, assistant principals, teachers, and central office staff. Through these interviews, I found that there was an intended procedure for how BBST meetings ran, but that intention was not always realized. Every school has a BBST leader who facilitates cases brought to them by a presenting teacher. The BBST leader reviews the DCAP – which includes interventions structured by skill that one should attempt when they encounter challenges. After the interventions are attempted for 5-6 weeks, the presenting teacher returns to the BBST where the academic response is reviewed. The team determines if progress was made and then decides if the student should continue with another round of interventions, move to a Special Education referral process or if enough progress was made to exit the BBST process. Oftentimes, the process did not work as described.

Key findings from those interviews revealed themes. Some of those include that the BBST process was “confusing” and that “inconsistent metrics to determine special education placement” exist across schools. Findings indicated “inequities in the BBST process” and variability in how each school implements the process. This variability can lead to student misplacements in the district’s Small Learning Group program.
Goal 3: Assemble and lead district stakeholders in the process of identifying national SST models and establish recommendations for RPS.

This goal was successfully met. I assembled a group of 21 stakeholders to form a BBST Working Group that prioritized restructuring the BBST model for more efficient use. The Working Group completed a review of the process which included conducting interviews with RPS leaders and staff and worked over the course of the year to develop research-based recommendations. The group met two times per month to review current and former practices across the district, research national Student Support Team models and develop recommendations for improving the BBST process in RPS. The group reviewed and considered research from national models that were similarly aligned to RPS core values and that serve similar populations to develop research-based recommendations to support the district in its efforts to meet the needs of its diverse learners. This goal rallied stakeholders in the process of restructuring the BBST process for the district. Members of this group identified research-based practices and national Student Support Team models.

**BBST Working Group Findings:**

- BBST meetings were often held during difficult times for teachers (outside of contractual hours).
- Some BBST Leads do not always have deep content knowledge oftentimes, impacting the depth of recommendations, particularly at the secondary level.
- There is a limited number of BBST meeting participants, impacting the diversity of perspectives at meetings.
Some view the BBST process as a “quick track” to Special Education instead of an opportunity to ensure all supports are offered to students and a way to avoid restrictive participation.

Unclear expectations for the BBST process (attendance requirements, meeting structure, documents).

The two main challenges I anticipated encountering during this process were equipping the community to overcome the challenges of change and receiving a financial commitment from the RPS School Committee. In March, I led members of the BBST Working Group, in a presentation to Superintendent Kelly where we shared findings and recommendations to Superintendent Kelly and Assistant Superintendent Gallucci. In this presentation, we highlighted the need for an increase in stipend amounts for BBST Leaders in addition to digitizing the BBST process. The district made the commitment to provide the necessary financial support, roughly $100,000, to improve the BBST process.

Implementation Plan for Monitoring Practices

A final priority of this strategic project was to create an implementation plan for monitoring practices that meet the needs of learners. At this time, the final recommendations of the Working Group will be presented to Superintendent Dr. Dianne Kelly in the spring to align with the district’s general timeline for making decisions that have budget implications. At the conclusion of my strategic project RPS will receive an implementation plan and guide for how to monitor progress of recommended practices to effectively monitor consistent BBST implementation and DCAP use. This plan will include recommendations, resources, a suggested timeline to meet recommendations and tips for how to successfully lead the organization through change.
I accurately assessed the problems with existing district practices. The teacher training, I led was effective. The focus groups I conducted and exit surveys collected validate this claim. Teachers now utilize the DCAP more frequently. As a result of these efforts (employing a structured Student Support Team model), there is preliminary evidence of success. On average, 70% of students that go through the BBST process in the district are recommended to participate in the special education referral process. After implementing new structures and providing resources to staff for implementation, 50% of students that participated in the BBST process at a test school, responded to the interventions offered through the BBST process and DCAP use and were not recommended to participate in the special education referral process. When considering the progress of this school, student achievement data suggests that consistent implementation of BBST structures, clarity of expectations for staff, and providing tools and resources to stakeholders to meet expectations, are effective strategies. When reflecting, this school’s principal stated, “…the process has definitely not only reduced overall referrals while meeting student needs but has also been effective in reducing teacher angst about student performance that was leading to over referrals to BBST.” By expanding this school’s efforts across the district, RPS will experience increased student achievement and lower student referrals to special education.

Analysis of Strategic Project

In this section, I explore why the project unfolded the way it did. More specifically, why I made key decisions and the impact on my project. I explain why I spent time learning about the community and context of Revere, the impact of including stakeholders in the change process and provide an analysis through the lens of institutional theory. I provide an analysis of factors
that RPS may face connected to institutional shifts, that it will encounter as it works towards full implementation of the recommendations provided.

At the conclusion of my strategic project, I identified factors that were evident throughout my work in RPS and that led to a consistent Student Support Team model and strengthened Tier 1 practices. These factors included clearly communicating the vision of the district around the BBST structure, providing stakeholder supports for implementation, providing ongoing assessment of practices and responding to the data. These factors in addition to understanding how change and broader organizational conditions contribute to greater student outcomes is crucial to RPS successfully implementing change.

The BBST Working Group created a vision and objectives for our work. The objectives of the Working Group were based on data collected from the community through interviews, one-on-one conversations, and the experiences of the Working Group members. We created an action plan including a timeline of our work and we documented it electronically and publicized it. This was foundational to the next phase of our work which included identifying areas of the BBST process that were not working well, developing recommendations for improving the process and developing an implementation strategy.

Institutional theory teaches us that there are invisible forces that guide behavior and lead to resistance to change within organizations. These forces, or three pillars of institutions, are constantly at play. When analyzing the *Understandings for Change and Broader Organizational Conditions* factor, **Figure 10** demonstrates how sub-factors may be categorized by the 3 pillars of institutions. The Cognitive Pillar, which is existing beliefs and behaviors that have been legitimized, appeared when some stakeholders shared beliefs about the BBST process not
needing change and working well. This was a belief of some in the community due to their longstanding operation in certain practices.

A key insight of institutional theory is the role of legitimacy. Not fully acknowledging the role legitimacy plays in beliefs, practices and structures in organizations could negatively impact reform in schools and implementation efforts. Understanding the important role legitimacy plays, impacted my approach to leading this work. “…legitimacy allows actors to accomplish a variety of other desirable aims and ends; when lacking, actors are constrained in accomplishing desired aims and ends (Bridwell-Mitchell, 2019).” A lack of legitimacy within institutions has a heavy cost. This is often why beliefs, practices and structures are longstanding within institutions. Scott argues that the three pillars “…define and reinforce what actors (1) accept as the proper rules and resource allocations, (2) perceive as socially desirable or normative, and (3) take for granted as true and appropriate (Bridwell-Mitchell, 2019).”

The Regulative Pillar in Action

This pillar refers to policies, rules, and regulations, which impact actors and their behavior. Rules and policies impact the work of teachers in schools every day. In RPS, policy around BBST implementation exists. Expectations have been shared with community members but the systems to ensure that these expectations are met, needed improving. The BBST Working Group created specific recommendations crafted to help ensure that the policies, rules, and regulations regarding BBST implementation are followed.

To attain the goals of improving Tier 1 instruction in the general education setting and having an effective districtwide Student Support Model, policy implementation was crucial. Identifying the necessary tools for responding to challenges that were present was an important step in effectively implementing systems and structures for managing change the district was
encountering. In addition to these components, considering the factors that led to policy implementation was also important. These factors included clearly communicating the change effort, providing stakeholders with support to implement and lead change, conducting ongoing assessment of efforts and leaders understanding change and how the broader organization conditions may contribute to change being successful within organizations.

Implementation of each factor was evident in my project. The work of the BBST Working Group was publicized and community meetings held to make the focus of my strategic project public. I garnered stakeholder support by utilizing the relationships I had with community members to gain a deeper understanding of the district priorities, needs, and seeking improvement ideas from stakeholders. I assessed the effectiveness of the BBST structure by conducting stakeholder interviews. I used the data from these interviews to establish objectives for the working group and priority areas for the BBST Working Group to focus on.

I used my understanding of the three pillars that undergird institutions to respond to the challenges that BBST Working Group faced. These challenges were centered around responding to the experiences of community members in a meaningful way. For example, most of the feedback received from the community described the BBST process as needing restructuring, and people expressed concern that there were many barriers associated with the process to overcome. Some of those barriers included the compensation amount for BBST Leads, times of meetings, inconsistent practices schools, etc. As BBST Working Group members shared these challenges, I realized this was consistent with the data I collected. It was indicative of the beliefs of many of the stakeholders in the community. Beliefs and practices had become such a part of the community that they were now the unwritten rules and norms. Understanding this reality,
would contribute to the recommendations the district would later receive. Figure 8 provides further analysis of how these key components worked together.

**Figure 8. Visual Representation of Project Factors and Outcomes**

*Building Trust and Learning the Context*

When engaging in this project, it was crucial that I accurately identified the correct challenges facing RPS. Kotter describes how forming a powerful coalition, is an important aspect of creating the climate for change. A powerful coalition with the right composition, level of trust, and shared objective is an “essential part of the early stages of any effort to restructure, reengineer, or retool a set of strategies (Kotter, 2012).” Forming a powerful guiding coalition to accurately diagnose the challenges facing RPS was crucial to the success of my project. The BBST Working Group functioned as this coalition.
Diving Deeper

I worked jointly with Superintendent Kelly and Assistant Superintendent Gallucci to introduce myself to the larger community. One of the very first interactions I had with a leader in the district occurred during a professional development session. The leader said, “I hope that your work is going to focus on Special Education. There are way too many kids in special education and too many kids must leave our district. It needs some attention and drastic overhaul!” It was at this moment that I knew that many in the organization were committed to making it the best it could be for students.

RPS is a very tight-knit community. Many have been within the organization for several years which allows for deep institutional knowledge and commitment. It was important for me to introduce myself to the community and share my intentions in partnering with the district to improve outcomes for students. Taking the time to introduce myself was important and contributed to my success in accessing important information about the experiences of the people in the community. I held Zoom forums with community members and spoke to principals, teachers, and directors to gain a sense of the system and the areas for improvement, as identified by the stakeholders.

Working with Community Members to Problem Solve

To include voices of multiple stakeholders and varied perspectives in the problem-solving process, I assembled a BBST Working Group. The objective of this group was to identify why the structure was not being used as intended and to develop recommendations for improving the BBST process. The BBST Working Group was comprised of various stakeholders from the community, including counselors, teachers, psychologists, etc. (See Appendix G.) The group met bi-monthly from October 2022 to May 2023. Some findings from the working group
were highlighted previously. The full list of recommendations is included in the RPS Implementation Plan provided to the district.

Recommendations for the BBST process were developed in consultation with stakeholders from the community. The community identified a need for change and a desire to embrace that change. There is an understanding that the current structure needs shifting. The recommendations prioritize the structure of the BBST process and focus on the barriers that prevent people from successfully moving through the process. The recommendations were student-centered and aligned to the district’s vision of advancing equity. Recommendations fall under the following eight priority areas: Meeting Structure, Scheduling, Expectations, Team Structure/Partnerships, Accountability, Strategies/DCAP, Digitization and Compensation.

As recommendations were created, BBST Working Group members encountered a few challenges. Those included navigating an “it’s always been done this way” belief within stakeholders, proposing change with little positional authority to institute change, developing structures that would promote using tools with fidelity, and providing tools and support to the people on the ground implementing change.

As the BBST Working Group engaged in the process of transforming the BBST, some team members interviewed stakeholders and solicited feedback about challenges faced and ideas for improvements. Some of the feedback collected indicated that the “process needed to be changed but that it would take too much to do it.” (RPS Teacher, 2023) Receiving feedback such as this was difficult for some team members. I supported them through this buy modeling how to tap into the power of the coalition that existed within the BBST Working Group. This included giving space during our monthly meetings to share challenges and problem solve. I also connected with team members one-on-one to work through challenges.


*Listening, Learning and Growing*

It was important for me to enter the RPS community with an ear to the ground and from a listener-orientation mode. Most of the employees of the school district have not only attended schools within the district, but many have deep roots within and a commitment to, the community. There is deep communal pride that exists within stakeholders in RPS and recognizing this during my strategic project was important to me.

Many in RPS have a deep understanding of and have contributed to, the historical and current context in which the strategic project was centered. In many ways, the tight-knitted nature of the community, which serves as a unique quality, can serve as a barrier. This may play itself out in new ideas not always being embraced, which may present a barrier to change within the organization. Realizing this led to me ensuring that a process was followed that included the voices of the stakeholders in the community.

Speaking and listening to community members led to building trust. This was evident in conversations that I had with community members where sensitive information was shared with me. Members of the RPS community shared their true feelings about what they felt was working well, not working well and what needed to change about the BBST process and how that has impacted special education within the district. Having a true sense of the experiences of people within the community helped me identify the root causes of problems the district was facing. This information also helped in making other decisions that impacted the special education department, mainly the restructuring of the department.
Positional Authority & Personal Authority

*Designing Leaders*, an organization committed to leadership development, describes positional authority as having the authority to make sure things can get done. “By virtue of your job title you have the authority to get things done, and also the responsibility to use that authority to make sure those things get done.” *Designing Leaders* defines personal authority as one leading when they may not be in a leadership position. Whether one is attempting to lead a boss in a particular situation, collaborating with a peer, or navigating a flat organization, one may need to step up without the power of a position. ([https://designingleaders.com/2016/06/positional-authority/](https://designingleaders.com/2016/06/positional-authority/)) Many on the BBST Working Group did not have the positional authority to implement some of the recommended changes moving forward, but they did possess personal authority.

Establishing personal authority requires being knowledgeable about your field, developing communication skills so ideas are clear and concise, and becoming a great listener so others’ perspectives can be understood. It also includes reserving your input for when it’s necessary. This sends the message that when you speak, it’s because it is necessary, “rather than you talking just to hear yourself talk ([https://designingleaders.com/2016/06/positional-authority/](https://designingleaders.com/2016/06/positional-authority/)).” I supported BBST Working Group members in realizing this authority by modeling this. The process I led involved the BBST Working Group members researching effective SST models and becoming “experts” on each. This in addition to Berta et. al’s 4 elements of effective SSTs was used to develop the group’s recommendations.

Using my theory of action as a barometer, I was successful in leading this project by the creation of the BBST Working Group and collaboration with the Special Education Department. The project met the intended goals that I jointly established with Superintendent Kelly. In
addition to this, recommendations for improving the BBST process were provided to the district and financial supports centered around strengthening the process were made. Success was attained due to including stakeholders in the process of gathering and analyzing information about district practices, researching current best practices in the education sector, and engaging the people most closely involved in the work to develop solutions to problems.

The two main challenges I anticipated encountering were equipping the community with the appropriate tools to overcome the challenges of change and receiving a financial commitment to make necessary improvements.

*Phases of the Work*

I prioritized phases of the work in two ways: *learn* what practices were in place in the district and *arm* the BBST Working Group with the necessary tools to learn about best practices in the field. Understanding why certain protocols and practices were in place was important to the change process that we were embarking on. Because school districts tend to be places where several traditions and practices are passed down and live on it was important to lead RPS in a process of researching current practices in the field in similar school districts and their effectiveness, and as a result, identify new strategies and best practices for RPS. This led to more opportunities to build trust with members of the community. After this phase of the work, we entered the *Arm* phase which included identifying the growth edges for the district and arming constituents with tools needed. This required identifying areas of growth for individuals, the Superintendent and her Administrative Team and identifying the next phases of systems and structures.

As I led my strategic project, I was mindful of how the role of change was showing up and how members within the organization were grappling with this. Harvard Graduate School of
Education’s Professor Ebony Bridwell-Mitchell’s Integrative Framework in a recent working paper provides a model from which we can view the interconnected parts within an organization and how they coexist. In the model, Bridwell-Mitchell describes how there are societal and sector-level institutions leading to different forms of agency – iterational, practical evaluative, or projective dimensions of agency – which people draw on as they act within a larger social context or institutional environment. From institutional environments cultural-cognitive, normative, and regulative forces arise, in addition to institutional logics or ways of thinking and acting in institutional environments. Institutional logics may be “enacted, activated, and deployed in different ways as actors exercise agency” to ultimately maintain, disrupt, or create institutions. The framework enables new insights around the complexities of organizations and the institutional innerworkings at play. This is the lens from which I created the Implementation Plan for RPS and approached transforming the BBST process. (See Figure 9).

Figure 9. Bridwell-Mitchell’s Institutional Analysis Framework
Key decisions impacted the progress of my project. Learning about the community and context of Revere, including stakeholders in the change process, and providing an analysis of factors RPS must consider through the lens of institutional analysis and Kotter’s 8 Stages of Change framework are all areas to be prioritized, as RPS works toward full implementation of the recommendations provided. The remainder of this Capstone will share my final recommendations for RPS and implications for myself, RPS and the sector.

Implications for Self, Site, and the Sector

Implications for Self

In this section, I discuss what I have learned in my effort to improve a district wide structure that was directly connected to Tier 1 instruction for all students, lead change in an unfamiliar setting while navigating the complexities of identity, the role of commonalities and alliances, and conditions for change in schools.

Improving Tier 1 Structures

My strategic project helped me deepen content knowledge around the importance of providing a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) model as a foundation to Tier 1 instruction. I entered the residency with multiple experiences implementing MTSS as a classroom teacher and principal. I was aware of the importance of the model, but my understanding of how this is foundational to ensuring students are afforded all opportunities to learn within the least restrictive setting increased as a result of my experiences. Due to my work leading MTSS reorganization in RPS, I researched national models as well as best practices for effective implementation. My understanding of how MTSS is foundational to Tier 1 instruction within the general education setting was deepened. MTSS is key to ensuring all students are
afforded access and opportunities to equitable learning environments. I will take this insight and apply it to my future work by always asking myself “What is happening in the Tier 1 general education setting for all learners?” and then guaranteeing educators have the necessary supports and tools to ensure equitable access and opportunities for all learners.

*Leading Change and Navigating the Complexities of Identity*

Identity is important. It plays a role in interactions with colleagues, decision-making processes, relationship-building, and in a host of other settings, where humans congregate. When I began my residency, I entered as a former teacher and school leader whose identity was different from the students I would be serving and the people that I would work alongside. I was aware that at least by appearance, this was different than my prior experiences, which all included working with adults and children that shared the same racial identity as me. Although, I would soon learn that there were commonalities across us, I was very aware of how my racial diversity was present.

I entered RPS fully aware of my racial and gender identities and how my race was different from the students that I would be serving and the adults that I would be working with and leading. I was also fully aware of Superintendent Kelly’s recognition of the work around equity that needed to take place in RPS. Initially I was curious about how my identity would impact my view of the organization, how those within the organization viewed me and my experiences. As I began to learn the context of the organization, build relationships with members of the community, establish trust, and support the work of centering equity in RPS, I was reminded of how my identity contributed to my unique perspective and how I would contribute to the organization.
As a student in the Ed.L.D. program, I completed the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Step II Assessment. This provides an in-depth personalized description of personality preferences. I found these results to be indicative of how I approached and completed the work connected to my strategic project. The assessment indicated that my personality preferences are *Introversion, Sensing, Feeling* and *Perceiving (ISFP)*. It is typical of people with an ISFP personality preference to care about what they do and show this through deeds rather than words. Loyalty to people, ideals and organizations is a strong suit of individuals with this preference. This commitment to care and loyalty, was demonstrated in my obligation to ensure RPS was provided with a plan of action and necessary supports to effectively implement the plan, upon the end of my residency. It was important to me that my work resulted in real change for the community.

Both my identity and personality profile played a role in my approach to leading in RPS. I balanced sharing my unique perspective which allowed me the space to step away from my usual way of approaching tasks. Considering how my personality preferences appear in my work is crucial when assessing the effectiveness of my work or efforts, especially in an unfamiliar context.

*Commonalities and Alliances*

I entered RPS as someone new to the community and unfamiliar with the systems, structures, routines, and norms of the district. I was aware of my lack of positional authority and the challenges this may present, especially as I embarked on leading change. These realities led to me prioritizing developing a better understanding of the challenges the district faced. Once I submerged myself within the community and demonstrated how I was on this journey with the stakeholders in the community, this helped me form alliances with people in the community that had the institutional knowledge and understanding of what needed to change. It was through this
process that trust was built, and commonalities revealed. Mainly, there was a common passion to see the BBST structure work better for children.

There were key learnings from my experience that are applicable in any setting. These include the importance of learning the context of an organization at the macro and micro levels, listening to the stakeholders in the community, building trust, working with the people who the change effort will impact the most to lead the change effort and the importance of identifying commonalities.

**Conditions for Change in Schools**

Understanding each of these areas above and how they have impacted my leadership, has led to a deeper understanding of the factors that impede change. I will continuously consider how institutional theory helps one understand organizations and why change efforts often stall within school districts and how Kotter’s 8 Steps of Change is crucial to assessing where one is in the process of change. I found that both, when working simultaneously, supported me in my efforts to enact change. I will apply this learning in my future work by always considering the silent forces at play within institutions and the forms they appear in - *regulative, normative,* and *cultural-cognitive.* I will also consider the role of legitimacy and be sure to disrupt perceptions, assumptions and actions that work against goals, objectives, and work towards the common good. As my strategic project unfolded, I learned how each of these played a reoccurring role in the work I was engaged in. Like a continuous cycle, each was important at different moments and appeared throughout the duration of my residency. Knowing when to make the correct move at the right time, like ballroom dancing, was integral to the success of my strategic project and the future work I will lead.
Implications for Site

In this section I provide an analysis of factors that RPS may face as it works toward full implementation of the recommendations provided. I provide an analysis of how RPS may consider institutional factors that cause resistance to change and how to assess progress in the process of change.

Kotter reminds us that, “whenever human communities are forced to adjust to shifting conditions pain is ever present (Kotter, pg. 4, 2012).” RPS made the commitment to instituting a structure that would allow teachers to bring concerns around student performance to a space where a team of practitioners could problem-solve and respond. The structure was necessary and attempted to meet the needs of learners. As time went on, use of the system shifted, and people began to change their view on the purpose of the structure. Due to shifting perspectives about the BBST process, RPS must continue to explore change management and arm stakeholders with the necessary tools and supports to work through the process. This is necessary to ensure change has a lasting impact within the organization.

A major factor to consider when responding to implementation challenges is understanding change and how the broader organizational conditions contribute to change in organizations. When leading the BBST Working Group, I encountered various sub-factors that I navigated the group through. Each of these sub-factors may be identified as one of the three pillars of institutions. In RPS’s next phase of implementation, they must consider these factors and be sure to employ 5 actions that will support them in successful policy implementation, leading to the student support model being used consistently throughout the district and greater student outcomes. Figure 10 provides further analysis of how these areas connect.
John Kotter’s 8 steps framework will arm RPS with the necessary tools to successfully implement the proposed recommendations. As a result of the work I led, the first 6 steps of the framework have been implemented. The vision of the work and the urgency around it was created based on feedback from the community. Key district leaders and stakeholders formed the guiding coalition that led to the formation of the BBST Working Group. Creating a new vision for improving the process used to support learners became a guiding force of the work. The plan that was developed provides a strategy for the BBST process where barriers that prevented successful implementation were removed. Replicating the short-term wins of the BBST Working Group is crucial to strengthening the SST process. This includes continuing to involve stakeholders in implementing and assessing change efforts. Finally, the two areas of the framework that have not been addressed yet are sustaining acceleration and instituting change. The Implementation Guide addresses how the district may consider focusing on these areas.

Figure 10. Residency and the Three Institutional Pillars
The yearlong process RPS engaged in was meaningful for community members and generated a renewed energy around stakeholder input and change. Continuing the work of this body will accelerate change efforts and support the institution. Centering stakeholders in the future work will provide the organization with the necessary tools to engage in the work. I recommend the following for RPS:

*Recommendations for Revere Public Schools*

1. RPS should implement the recommendations provided in the final BBST Memo.

2. Prioritize use of the DCAP in Tier 1 instruction throughout the district. The BBST process does not require teachers to use strategies and interventions in the DCAP, prior to making a BBST referral. Rather than a teacher waiting to initiate and engage in the BBST process, strategies can be used more quickly with students, providing a more robust learning experience for students where differentiation and extension opportunities are present.

3. Ensure that the most recent strategies and instructional practices are reflected in the DCAP by collaborating with district departments (Special Education, English Learners, ELA, Math, Science, etc.) to review, make contributions and updates to the document yearly.

4. The Special Education Coordinators should monitor and assess school progress toward full DCAP implementation by serving on the BBST and conducting quarterly monitoring and assessment reviews with school-based teams.

5. The Special Education Department, Assistant Superintendent of Pupil Services and Superintendent should create a professional learning community for the BBST Leads
while considering specific elements of change management. Specifically, they should consider the three pillars of institutions and the impact of legitimacy in change efforts and plan professional learning opportunities that support BBST Leads in working through challenges and leadership development.

6. Arm leaders in the district with tools to embrace the change they will encounter when leading change by engaging in a yearlong book study of *Leading Change* by John Kotter. Principles from the text will support efforts to institute structures that will strengthen the BBST process, specifically developing the 8 Accelerators and the 4 Change Principles change occurs, change management and leadership.

**Implications for Sector**

In this section I provide an analysis of factors that the American preK-12 education sector should consider. I provide an analysis of how isomorphic pressures and the use of data as a response can support educators to successfully meet the needs of learners within the sector.

**Isomorphism**

In the education sector, isomorphic pressures are constantly at play when considering the impact of change. DiMaggio and Powell argue that forces exist that lead to organizations in a field becoming like each other. “... isomorphism is a constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).” Oftentimes, people within organizations succumb to coercive, mimetic, or normative pressures. Coercive pressures may involve political influence and subtle actions. Mimetic pressures involve the role of uncertainty within an organization around systems, structures, etc. Normative pressures stem from professionalization and the challenges of defining
conditions and methods. Within the field of education, actors are constantly considering how change will appear and in what form. Whether through a curriculum initiative, new teaching strategy, or the like, educators are often forced to grapple with change. Instituting structures such as MTSS and considering the role of isomorphic pressures, is important because each will influence efforts to institute change and address challenges.

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) remind us that over time, organizations become more like each other. “...bureaucratization and other forms of organizational change occur as the result of processes that make organizations more similar without necessarily making them more efficient (p. 147).” To work against this and to achieve efficiency, actors in the field, must consistently engage in a process of collecting data and feedback and hold themselves accountable to responding to the data and feedback appropriately. As RPS implements the recommendations for improving MTSS, it must continue to monitor and assess implementation by including members of the community in its efforts. This practice should occur throughout the sector.

*Using Data as a Response to Isomorphic Pressures*

To say the role of data in society is important would be a gross understatement. In the field of education, data undergirds most decisions that are made. Budgets, visions, mission statements and several other key areas are significantly impacted by data. It is not enough to collect data, one must collect, analyze, synthesize, and respond to it as well. Data about the effectiveness of systems and structures that are in use in addition to data around how people are engaging and implementing those systems and structures is important. Oftentimes, systems and structures are in use and the experiences of the people implementing those systems and structures is unknown. Isomorphic practices become part of the organization's identity and the people doing the work are only doing it ceremonially because it has been legitimized in some form, not
because it is the most impactful. Actively working against these pressures is a constant battle but worth the fight because the reward deeply impacts students.

**Takeaways**

RPS and other school districts can actively work against isomorphism by constantly engaging in the process of collecting, analyzing, and responding to data. At both the district and school levels, engaging in this active process will lead to meeting the needs of more students in a timelier manner. Identifying structures and systems that are student-centered and grounded in equity is key. Purposefully using those structures centered on meeting the needs of students must be a priority. Providing stakeholders with the necessary tools to fully implement practices and structures is important. Assessing use of those tools and structures and adjusting along the way is equally as important.

**Conclusion**

Every student deserves a high-quality education. To deliver on this promise, clear and effective systems and structures must be in place. Oftentimes, the overwhelming sense of urgency and lack of strategic adherence to systems comprises the process and continuous improvement. The fast-paced nature of schools often devalues slowing down to assess efforts. Analyzing and assessing efforts is crucial to advancing education and truly meeting the needs of all who are relying on the system to work. Successful implementation for all RPS students includes clear communication of the new BBST process, providing tools for the stakeholders to implement change and using a process to assess efforts. These factors are crucial for RPS to consider as it embarks on these change efforts.
When RPS communicates the new BBST process, it should prioritize sharing the vision for the BBST process, clear structures and systems and its rationale for use of those systems with all stakeholders. Communication of these structures and systems should occur through various methods such as staff meetings and through written and verbal communication. In addition, there should be an investment in professional learning to support high-quality implementation.

Providing tools for its stakeholders to implement necessary change includes providing more oversight support as it relates to implementation and the creation of a professional learning community. Offering a professional learning community where BBST Leads can gather monthly to share best practices, develop facilitation skills, problem-solve, and participate in case studies will provide BBST Leads with more opportunities to develop skills required to lead this change. Through RPS’ newly redesigned Special Education Department model, more capacity has been created to provide this support. The newly created Special Education Coordinator role will support schools in creating and leading professional development opportunities for staff and for leads. The person serving in this role will also serve on the BBST team, contributing additional content expertise to the process and providing oversight support.

Finally, RPS should constantly assess its efforts through use of Kotter’s 8 Stages of Change framework and by leveraging its understanding of institutional forces and how they contribute to change within organizations. Kotter’s framework will provide an outline to identify where RPS is in the process of change. In RPS’s assessment efforts, reflecting on how institutional forces are appearing and causing resistance to change, will effectively arm RPS in responding to the needs of the organization.

Without full implementation of each of these areas above, the process of creating institutions where equity truly leads and guides all decisions, processes, systems, and structures
won’t be fully realized. Effective implementation of the recommendations provided to RPS will require consistent monitoring and assessing practices. It will also require constantly engaging stakeholders in the process of reviewing and refining district efforts.
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Appendices A-L
Appendix A. Revere Public Schools Demographics (taken from MADESE)

### Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity (2020-21)

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### Title

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<tr>
<th>Title</th>
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<th>% of State</th>
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<td>First Language not English</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>23.9</td>
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<td>English Language Learner</td>
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<td>11.0</td>
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<td>Low-income</td>
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<td>43.8</td>
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<td>18.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>High Needs</td>
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<td>55.6</td>
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Revere Public Schools Theory of Change

If we focus on, provide educator professional development in, and provision adequately in the following four areas...

**Rigorous Curricula**
- Meeting the needs of diverse learners
- Progress monitoring/data driven decisions
- Tiered/Differentiated instruction (Universal Design for Learning, Mass Tiered Support System)
- Effective and appropriate instructional practices
- Effective use of technology to increase academic rigor
- Common Core, IBD Units, Common Rubrics
- EDWIN, ANet
- Read IBD, System 44
- Pre-AP program expanded to all middle schools
- Increase numbers of students taking and the number of students earning qualifying scores on AP exams

**Relevant Curricula**
- Maintain currency in state and national educational trends
- Common Core/College & Career
- MDIA
- Effective use of technology to increase instructional relevance
- Achieve 3000
- Lexia Core 5
- Agile Mind
- Flipped/Blended Learning
- Dual Language Program
- Footsteps to Brilliance
- Application of learning in state and national fairs (Science, History, etc.)
- Alternative Programs (Community School, Seafront, Coast)

**Relationships**
- Empower stakeholders to make decisions (MBEES)
- Five District Partnership
- Professional Learning Groups
- School Improvement Councils, Instructional Leadership Teams
- Teacher Leaders (Eval Leads, EDWIN Leads, PLG Facilitators, Coaches)
- Community Partners for every school
- Working with families, PTA, SEPAC
- Positive student/parent/teacher/admin relations
- Open circles/9BS/Advisory
- Peer Observations
- Educate “evaluation” system

**Resilience**
- Teaching students to persist through academic struggle
- Teaching students to persist through personal struggle
- Helping teachers and administrators persist through increased mandates
- Innovate to be ahead of the mandates
- Seeking grants to supplement level funding (Mills Mox, DSAC Gateway Cities, Dropout Prevention, etc.)
- Provide necessary tools for students to stay ahead of the curve (IPads, 1-to-1 Lab tops)
- Building symbolic Capital (Uniforms, achievement banners, awards ceremonies)

...all students will receive a personalized and meaningful education so that they individually experience superior personal development.
Appendix C. Kotter’s 8 Steps to Change

**FIGURE 2.2**

The eight-stage process of creating major change

1. **Establishing a sense of urgency**
   - Examining the market and competitive realities
   - Identifying and discussing crises, potential crises, or major opportunities

2. **Creating the guiding coalition**
   - Putting together a group with enough power to lead the change
   - Getting the group to work together like a team

3. **Developing a vision and strategy**
   - Creating a vision to help direct the change effort
   - Developing strategies for achieving that vision

4. **Communicating the change vision**
   - Using every vehicle possible to constantly communicate the new vision and strategies
   - Having the guiding coalition role model the behavior expected of employees

5. **Empowering broad-based action**
   - Getting rid of obstacles
   - Changing systems or structures that undermine the change vision
   - Encouraging risk-taking and nontraditional ideas, activities, and actions

6. **Generating short-term wins**
   - Planning for visible improvements in performance, or “wins”
   - Creating those wins
   - Visibly recognizing and rewarding people who made the wins possible

7. **Consolidating gains and producing more change**
   - Using increased credibility to change all systems, structures, and policies that don’t fit together and don’t fit the transformation vision
   - Hiring, promoting, and developing people who can implement the change vision
   - Reinigorating the process with new projects, themes, and change agents

8. **Anchoring new approaches in the culture**
   - Creating better performance through customer- and productivity-oriented behavior, more and better leadership, and more effective management
   - Articulating the connections between new behaviors and organizational success
   - Developing means to ensure leadership development and succession

Appendix D. Kotter’s Change Process + 4 Change Principles = Network

At the end of a transformation, your org chart might look a little different. Your hierarchy will still be in place, as it’s critical for day-to-day operations. But, in addition, you’ll now have a network constantly innovating and poised to jump at the next opportunity.
Appendix E. BBST Working Group Statement

BBST Working Group

Working Group Vision Statement
Our district is continuing to ensure all efforts are made to meet the needs of students in the least restrictive environment. We will use the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) and the Building-Based Support Team (BBST) interventions to consistently implement and document that all efforts have been made to meet the needs of diverse learners in the general education program.

The BBST Working Group will review current and former Revere Public School’s Building Based Support Team practices across the district. The BBST Working Group will review and consider research from national models that are similarly aligned to RPS core values and that serve similar populations. The BBST Working Group will develop research-based recommendations to support the district in its efforts to meet the needs of its diverse learners.

BBST Working Group Members will:
- attend 10 Working Group meetings that will take place during:
  - 5 Director’s Meetings (will take the place of the course that you have already signed up for)
  - 5 Zoom Meetings (dates and times TBD)
- participate in BBST meeting observations
- review current structures and systems
- review data (district wide, national, etc)
- provide feedback around BBST experience
- co-develop recommendations for the BBST process
- receive PDPs for participating in BBST Working Group Sessions

Please note, there may be other responsibilities required of BBST Working Group members.

Compensation
Members will be compensated for attending meeting times outside of the Wednesday Director Meeting Sessions at the hourly contractual rate.

To express interest in participating, please sign up here: https://forms.gle/j4JyxF8zeZsGo88UA

For more Information or, please reach out to Mona Ford Walker at mfordwalker@reverek12.org and Dr. Richard Gallucci at rgallucci@reverek12.org.

First Meeting: Wednesday, October 19, 2022 12:40pm - 2:40pm
### SWOT Analysis - November 2022

#### Strengths
- Designed to be collaborative and data driven
- DCAP does exist, lots of good strategies/could be a backbone if used correctly
- People are passionate about the process
- Student centered
- Intended to be thorough and collect data
- Opportunity for people who may not have a chance to communicate about a student to come together
- Give teachers ideas they may not have considered
- Collaborative process, good sounding board
- Existing BBST teams across school buildings are made up of diverse members (i.e. teachers, gen ed, sped, therapists, counselors, ELL teachers)
- Emphasizes a strengths-centered approach to intervention
-Requires team to reconvene and follow up to meet about student concerns and progress
- Identify students who present the strongest needs
- Provide Tier 2 supports (math intervention groups, Title 1 reading support)
- Provide Tier 1, 2 strategies (ex. DCAP)

#### Weaknesses
- Follow through from staff who are seeking supports through BBST. Decreased or inconsistent implementation of strategies
- Different at every building
- Not occurring at every building
- Clarity within the process
- No one clear consistent process across the district (even within grade levels)
- Perceptions of what the process can really achieve
- Not enough teacher buy-in
- It’s not consistent across the district
- Lots of barriers (checklist feeling)
- Unclear objectives (fast track for special education or not?)
- Inconsistent protocol across buildings; all schools follow a different process
- Quality of data collection and implementation, with evidence
- BBST’s name is also confusing.
- The team is not necessarily consistent - just the facilitators. (why is it not just called RTI or MTSS like the rest of the country)
- Inconsistent practices across the district.
- Data collection
- Tier 2 supports (some kids are missed; for ex: one student was found ineligible for SPED but did not meet the criteria for our math intervention group - How do we support students like this from an RTI standpoint?)
- Biases re: BBST in the building (i.e., restructuring language [helpful/unhelpful process])

#### Opportunities
- Create a resource bank. Strategies at their fingertips available.
- Opportunity for training
- Digitizing forms is more convenient and trackable.
- Providing a training on the process
- Streamline the paperwork
- Having the training happen during contracted time
- Collaboration with different professionals for advice to help meet students needs
- BBST process tracker to show what students have been through the BBST process already.
- Teachers with a wide range of experiences and backgrounds offering advice. Create a unified, streamlined set of protocols for all buildings to follow/implement
- Training for all staff for existing and new employees.
- Reconsider compensation and timing of meetings to make the process more accessible & realistic for teachers to participate
- We have a lot of knowledge, experience, and dedication within our working group
- Offer a menu of supports outside of DCAP that speaks to school specific supports/interventions
- Get new teachers up to speed during August orientation, rather than waiting until January to share the BBST process
- Provide psychoed and training for uniform data tracking within and across buildings
- Addressing biases re: BBST in the building (i.e., restructuring language [helpful/unhelpful process] →
- trainings, restorative practices
- Implement different/varied Tier 2 supports

#### Threats
- Misconception that BBST is not a sped process (i.e. sped can’t be on the team)
- BBST meets after school
- Perception that it is a process only concerned with identifying students for special education.
- Not getting buy-in from administration
- Not getting buy-in from teachers
- Too much paperwork
- Too much overlap
- Certain teachers overuse the process, legitimate concerns may not be taken seriously.
- Resistance to change “my way is the best way” a.k.a. Fixed mindset
- Viewed as a SPED-pipeline, not a separate intervention process/entity
- Time constraints for team to meet
- % of BBST referrals that are going to Sped testing is potentially too high
- Funding
- Time
- Mindset (discomfort re: change)
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<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
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<td>FIRST Name</td>
<td>LAST Name</td>
<td>Email</td>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Content Area</td>
<td>School</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>10/17/2022 13:10:41</td>
<td>Classroom Teacher but dual certified in Special Ed Pre-k-8</td>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>Hill</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>10/17/2022 13:13:41</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Hill</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>10/17/2022 13:18:09</td>
<td>ETL</td>
<td>special education</td>
<td>Lincoln</td>
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<td>3-5, ESL</td>
<td>GES</td>
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<td>Middle School SPED Teacher</td>
<td>Life Skills</td>
<td>SBA</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>10/17/2022 14:00:08</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Math, ELA</td>
<td>RMA</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Special Education Inclusion Teacher</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Revere High School</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>10/17/2022 14:56:46</td>
<td>Occupational therapist</td>
<td>Special ed</td>
<td>GES, OMA, mra RHS</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>10/17/2022 14:57:43</td>
<td>Service Provider - BCBA</td>
<td>Student behavior</td>
<td>Beachmont/Hill</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Am I able to join this as a behavior analyst?</td>
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<td>special educator</td>
<td>grade 5 inclusion - Ieac Garfield Elementary</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>10/17/2022 16:46:11</td>
<td>School Psychologist</td>
<td>N/A School Psychologist</td>
<td>Garfield Elementary &amp; M I</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>Principal</td>
<td>administrator</td>
<td>Rurney Marsh Academy</td>
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<td>Kindergarten Teacher</td>
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<td>Hill</td>
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<td>10/18/2022 8:21:14</td>
<td>4th grade classroom teacher</td>
<td>ELA/Social studies</td>
<td>Lincoln</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>10/18/2022 9:57:20</td>
<td>Asst. Principal</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Abraham Lincoln Elem</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>10/21/2022 9:30:20</td>
<td>School Psychologist</td>
<td>cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral functioning</td>
<td>Hill and Beachmont</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I look forward to joining the team as I am interested in working together to highlight strengths and identify areas of need for the BBST process. As a school psychologist (PsyD), I have professional and academic experience in data analysis, cognitive abilities, and social, emotional, and behavioral functioning. Salt knowledge could help inform goal creation, monitoring, as well as the appropriateness of specific GCAU accommodations. Additionally, in my last district, I chaired our BBST. I learned first-hand how to support teachers, collaborate, as well as create and monitor a support plan. I am excited for this opportunity!</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>10/21/2022 10:52:31</td>
<td>Math Interventionist</td>
<td>Math (previously grade 6) - Whelan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Would love to know the schedule - if you have an idea of when the group will meet, so that I can arrange childcare. Thanks!</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>10/24/2022 12:34:18</td>
<td>Occupational Therapist</td>
<td>OT - Elementary</td>
<td>Beachmont/Whelan</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Thank you for allowing me to participate in the 5 virtual BBST working group! I am looking forward to supporting this work!</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>10/27/2022 19:22:01</td>
<td>Math Interventionist</td>
<td>Math, k-5</td>
<td>Beachmont</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Hello, nice to work with you again and to be a part of the group. Here's looking forward to the virtual meetings. Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of the group.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>11/1/2022 14:03:26</td>
<td>Special Education Teacher</td>
<td>Small Group</td>
<td>AC Whelan</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Unable to join in on Director’s meetings.</td>
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<td>10/02/23 16:59:16</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>If we had a look at all of the different models, I know what I think this should look like, but I'm not sure how to get there.</td>
<td>If yes, why? If no, why? If somewhat, why?</td>
<td>What stood out to you during today’s presentation?</td>
<td>What did you hear today that you believe EPS should explore more?</td>
<td>Identify ideas/thoughts about the next phase of work for the BBST Working Group.</td>
<td>Questions/Concerns</td>
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<td>10/02/23 17:03:23</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>I would prefer to just listen to my own. I don’t do well with group presentations.</td>
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<td>None at this time. Thanks for giving us space to share this information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/02/23 17:08:56</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I like hearing about new/relevant models compared to others in my own experience.</td>
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<td>10/02/23 17:09:14</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I've heard about OpenBBST before and this is a new one.</td>
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<td>10/02/23 17:09:58</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>If it was helpful to hear what is working in other districts.</td>
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<td>10/02/23 17:09:59</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>If it was good to hear how other districts do it. It made me excited to start thinking about our system.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/02/23 17:09:19</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I was interested in hearing different approaches and seeing similarities and differences to our current process.</td>
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<td>10/02/23 17:10:30</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Others' work on the presentations, and filling out what seems great and what feels old.</td>
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<td>10/02/23 17:10:34</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I was interested in hearing what the other groups have heard.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/02/23 17:10:57</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I was intrigued by how other districts are doing it and what's been learned from that.</td>
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<td>10/02/23 17:14:42</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I appreciated hearing the other models as well as some other experiences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/02/23 17:14:27</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I was interested to hear about a specific program that other districts use to improve their process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/02/23 17:16:37</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>I was interested in hearing what other districts are doing. I think it feels like there is a substantial job to be done.</td>
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<td>10/02/23 17:17:02</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I was interested in hearing different approaches and seeing similarities and differences to our current process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/02/23 17:17:36</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I was interested in hearing different approaches and seeing similarities and differences to our current process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/02/23 17:18:42</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I was interested in hearing different approaches and seeing similarities and differences to our current process.</td>
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Appendix H. BBST Working Group Meeting Notes
Appendix I. DCAP on RPS Website
# Revere DCAP Training Schedule

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>School (Address)</th>
<th>Time</th>
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</table>
| Tuesday, 9/20 | A.C. Whelan Elementary School    | 9:30-9:50 - Grades 4 & 5  
|            |                                   | 9:20-10:00 - Service  
|            |                                   | Providers who are not able to join the grade level sessions  
|            |                                   | 10:00-10:40 - Grades K & 1  
|            |                                   | 10:40-11:20 - Grades 2 & 3  
|            |                                   | 12:40-1:20 - PGT Room  |
| Monday, 9/19 | Abraham Lincoln School            | 8:30-9:15, ELL/Related Services/Interventionists/Specialists/Non-Mainstream  
|            |                                   | 9:15-9:55, Grades 2 & 3  
|            |                                   | Coaches  
|            | Wednesday, 9/21                   | 9:55-10:35, Grades K & 1  
|            |                                   | Kordia  
|            |                                   | 10:35-11:15, Grades 4 & 5  
|            |                                   | EC, Magna  
|            | Make up is scheduled for the 21st  |
| Monday, 9/19 | Beachmont School                  | 8:45-9:25  
|            |                                   | 9:30-10:45  |
| Tuesday, 9/20 | CityLab High School               | 12:30 in room 214  |
| Friday, 9/16 | Garfield Elementary               | 9:25 - 9:45  
|            |                                   | Room 322, Grade 4 & 5  
|            |                                   | 10:31 - 11:11  
|            |                                   | Room 223, EC, Grade 2 & 3  
|            |                                   | 12:40 - 1:20  
|            |                                   | Room 112, Grade 1 & K  
|            |                                   | 2:05-2:45, Music Room  |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>School (Address)</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 9/20</td>
<td>ESL, Teachers Encore Intervention Teachers</td>
<td>11:30-12:10, SLG, OT, PT, Speech</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Wednesday, 9/21 | Garfield Middle School           | 8:40-9:00  
|            |                                   | 9:08-11:03  
|            |                                   | 12:28-1:23  
|            | Wednesday, 9/21                   | 1:25-2:20  |
| Wednesday, 9/21 | Paul Revere Innovation            | 12:40 (in the library)  |
| Monday, 9/19 | Revere High School                | 7:35-8:14  |
| Tuesday, 9/20 | Runway Marsh Academy              | 10:15 (Room 329)  
|            |                                   | 11:11 (Room 225)  
|            |                                   | 12:30 (Room 322)  
|            |                                   | 1:30 (Room 127)  |
| Friday, 9/16 | Hill Elementary School            | 9:15-10:00  
|            |                                   | 10:35 - 11:15  
|            |                                   | 12:35 - 1:15  
|            |                                   | 1:15 - 2:00  
|            |                                   | 2:00 - 2:40  |
| Wednesday, 9/21 | Susan B. Anthony Middle           | 9:15-10:00  
|            |                                   | 10:35 - 11:15  
|            |                                   | 12:35 - 1:15  
|            |                                   | 1:15 - 2:00  
|            |                                   | 2:00 - 2:40  |
Appendix K. RTI Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring Practices

Table 3  Implications for practice for universal screening and progress monitoring practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RTI component</th>
<th>Practical implications for students with LD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Eligibility and exit decisions | 1. The implementation of an RTI model reduces misidentification for eligibility by systematically screening all students.  
2. Educators should set criteria for exit from special education services and frequently reevaluate student performance to determine continued eligibility or the need to make an exit decision. |
| Evidence-based practices | 1. Educators should use EBP that have clearly defined components but can be flexibly adapted for use with different students.  
2. Educators should carefully consider intervention intensity in order to provide students in need of tier 3 special education services with adequate amounts of intervention instruction as well as instruction that is explicit. |
| Progress monitoring    | 1. Progress monitoring allows for observation of whether students with LD are making progress toward meeting expectations given current resources.  
2. Progress monitoring assists in determining whether students with LD need more or less intensive resources to meet expectations.  
3. Progress monitoring assists in determining if current instructional intervention is benefiting students with LD or if changes should be considered. |
| Tiers of services delivery | 1. Schools may want to spend more resources conducting multi-stage screenings for students at-risk for academic failure in order to more accurately determine which students are not at risk and which students’ risk is so great they should bypass tier 2 intervention and move directly into tier 3 intensive intervention (i.e., use direct route screening).  
2. Schools should consider providing higher-intensity interventions for their students with the greatest discrepancy and ensure that the teachers implementing these interventions have the necessary expertise to implement the intervention and change instruction in response to a student’s needs. |
| Universal screening    | 1. Universal screening is the first step in identifying students at risk for not meeting expectations, including those with LD.  
2. Universal screening allows for comparison between the skill level of students with LD and their peers.  
3. Universal screening allows for observation of how well students with LD are performing at the classroom, grade, and district level. |

LD learning disabilities, RTI response to intervention
Appendix L: BBST Working Group Working Timeline

| Timeline |

- **October**
  - BBST WG Launch
    - Establish WG Agenda
      - Establish WG Vision, Mission, Priorities
    - Establish Norms, Routines, Practices
    - Explore SST Models
      - Review BBST in Revere (procedures, policies, etc.)
      - Meet with BBST leads
      - Research SST models
      - Establish SST research sites
    - Plan site visits
  - Drafting Recommendations
    - Conduct site visits
    - Stakeholder interviews (teachers, leaders, etc.)
    - Conversations w/ BBST Leads
    - Identify takeaways from visit
    - Identify focal priorities

- **November**
  - Field Work
    - Stakeholder interviews (teachers, leaders, etc.)
    - Pilot elements of models w/ test schools
    - Organize & Prioritize recommendations
  - Public Facing Materials
    - Finalize BBST recommendations
    - Draft BBST Report
    - Draft Communication Plan to the district
    - WG one-on-one interviews with Mona (process, product, etc.)

- **December**
  - Finalize Work
    - Identify next steps for BBST WG
    - Presentation to Supt. & team
    - Finalize Communication Plan to the district
    - Finalize work of BBST WG for SY