

Special Education Funding in Washington State

Dr. Tania May

Assistant Superintendent
of Special Education
tania.may@k12.wa.us

Dr. Cassie Martin

Executive Director
of Special Education
cassie.martin@k12.wa.us



Special Education Funding in WA State

- Basic Education Allocation (BEA) rate = \$10,000 x All Students
- Special Education Allocation calculation = BEA rate x 0.995 x Students with IEPs



Decision Package: Fully Fund Special Education

- School districts in Washington spend over \$400M more per year than they receive in special education funding. This gap is covered by local funding sources.
- OSPI is requesting that our State Legislature:
 - Remove the 13.5% cap on K-12 state special education funds;
 - Increase the special education multipliers, including the Pre-K multiplier and the tiered K-12 multiplier; and
 - Sustain the statewide investment for inclusionary practices.
- [House Bill 1436](#), [Senate Bill 5311](#)/[House Bill 1211](#), [Senate Bill 5511](#), [Senate Joint Memorial 8007](#)

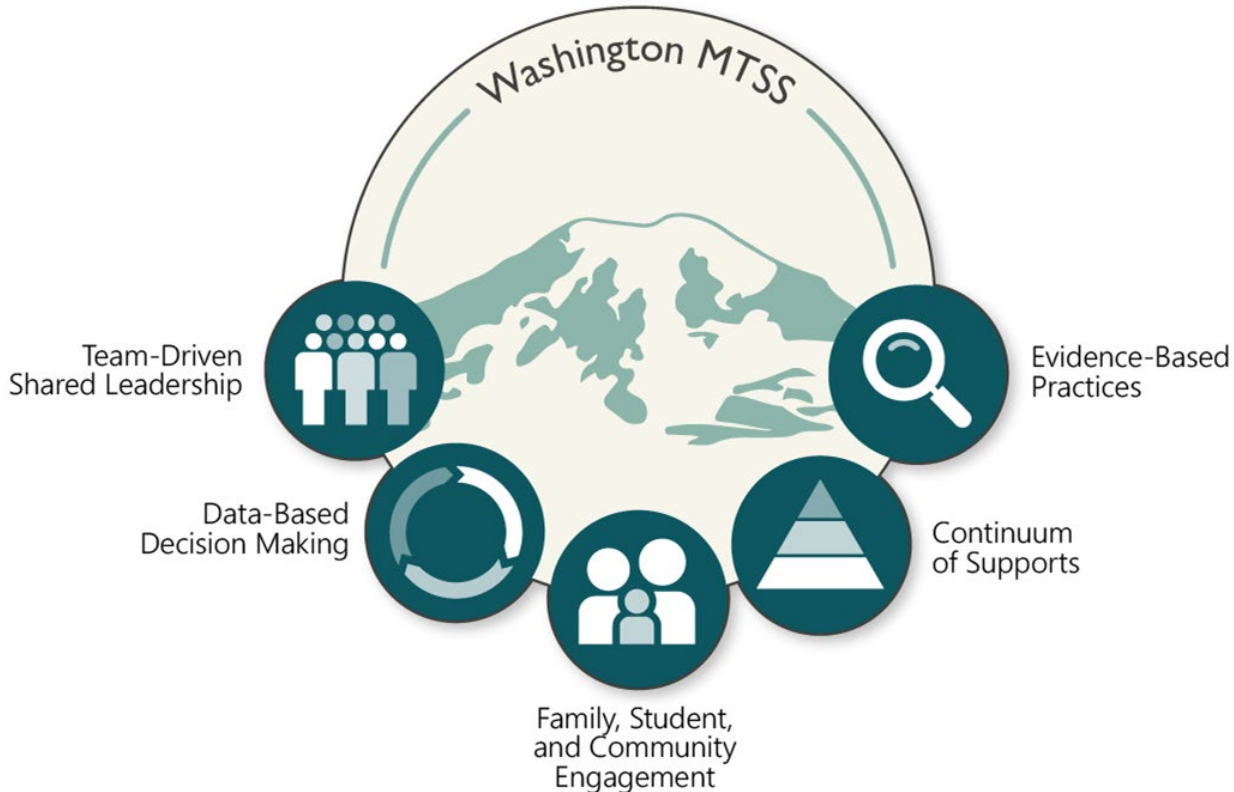
What Does This Mean for Students, Families & Schools?

- Fully funding special education would close the \$400M gap in special education and remove district reliance on local funding for the costs of special education services.
- Fully funding special education would increase availability of local funds for preventive services and interventions for all students, including social emotional learning, mental health supports, and enrichment activities.

What about accountability?

- Washington is required to measure and address over-representation in special education, in identification, placement, and discipline.
- Disproportionality is a measure of the likelihood that a student from a particular group (e.g., race/ethnicity) will be identified, disciplined, or segregated at a higher rate than other students.
- OSPI also monitors special education funding, programming, outcomes, and dispute resolution trends.
- Inclusionary Practices funding supports professional development for education partners statewide within a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) framework.

5 Core Components of WA MTSS



- Team Driven Shared Leadership
- Data Based Decision Making
- Family, Student, and Community Engagement
- Continuum of Supports
- Evidence Based Practices

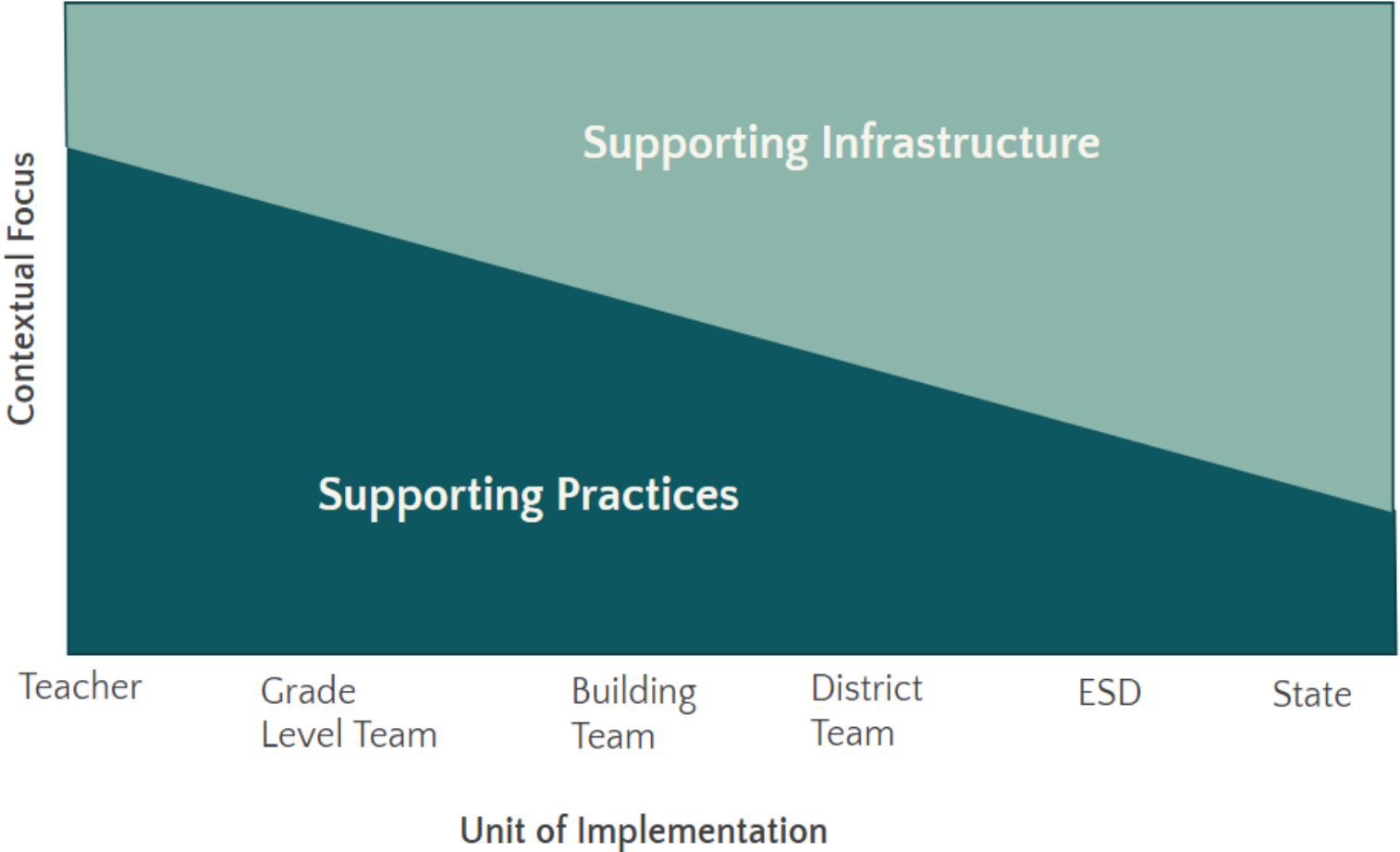
Defining Disproportionality in Special Education

- Students identified as having disabilities in Washington are more likely to be male, BIPOC, and experiencing poverty.¹
- States are federally required to evaluate and address district-level disproportionality in special education related to the **identification**, **placement**, and **discipline** of students with IEPs, by race/ethnicity.
- Disproportionality is a mechanism to measure and analyze adult responses to student needs, across shared student identities – race and ability.

¹Theobald, R. J., Goldhaber, D. D., Gratz, T. M., & Holden, K. L. (2019). Career and Technical Education, Inclusion, and Postsecondary Outcomes for Students With Learning Disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 52(2), 109–119. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022219418775121>



Everyone Has a Role to Play!



Source: Steve Goodman



How Can Partners Stay Involved?

- Ask your school and district about current special education funding and how spending decisions are made. Ask about interventions for students that are culturally affirming.
- Share your lived experiences and ideas for ways to foster learning and belonging in schools.
- Follow along as the legislature considers funding for special education: HB 1436 and SB 5311.
- Reach out to OSPI Special Education with questions or feedback at speced@k12.wa.us.