

DMGROUP IN ACTION

Vermont Schools Leverage DMSchedules Software Statewide

by Richard Viard

Originally published in the *District Management Journal*, v.31, Spring 2022

*Teachers like the ability to see everyone's schedule;
it makes it easy to schedule for auxiliary staff and
for special area teachers who are responsible for
duties and other unstructured times of the day.*

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In its Act 173 of 2018, the Vermont Agency of Education (AoE) had the key objective of enhancing the effectiveness, availability, and equitable delivery of services to students who require additional support. The Vermont AoE understood that realizing this objective would require ensuring that school schedules allow extra time for the delivery of interventions, IEP requirements, and other services to address the needs of all students.

To help elementary schools build these best-practice schedules, the Vermont AoE made DMSchedules scheduling software and services available to all 247 of its public elementary schools. DMSchedules for Elementary Schools software allows schools to quickly and easily build and manage elementary school schedules that incorporate best practices and align to strategic goals. Ninety-nine of the 247 schools enrolled to use DMSchedules for the 2021-22 year, and a total of 110 Vermont elementary schools are enrolled to use DMSchedules in the 2022-23 academic year.

With DMSchedules, schools are building schedules that enable students, teachers, and service providers to make the most of their time. The new schedules are making a meaningful difference in the schools' ability to deliver supports to students, and are making life easier for teachers, administrators, and service providers in the following ways:

- **Dedicated intervention time is embedded into the main schedule:** The schedule provides time such that interventions and supports can be provided in addition to core instruction, not instead of core instruction, in keeping with best practices. Debra L. Fishwick, Ed.D., principal of Manchester Elementary Middle School/Bennington-Rutland Supervisory Union, shared:

“DMSchedules allows us to set the schedule and allow for times for our interventions, special service, morning meetings/SEL time—these times are known in advance, and service providers are no longer negotiating with teachers for the availability of students.”



FAST FACTS

Vermont



Students in
PK-12:

78,928

(2021)*

Students in
Elementary (K-5):

32,875

(2021)*

Public
Elementary Schools:

247

(2021)**

[illegible]

75



Shawn Gonyan, principal of Marion Cross School, School Administrative Unit 70, shared a similar reflection:

“Prior, we had all sorts of individual schedules that were complicated to keep track of. This system allows us to keep all schedules in one place for all staff to access. This has improved communication, allowed more integration from special educators and service providers, and allows administration to know where kids are and what is being taught throughout the day.”

- **Schedules are easy to build:** Interventions and supports can be scheduled with ease by dragging and dropping these schedule blocks as pre-defined periods that match the school’s guidelines and priorities. Conflicts can be identified immediately. The ease of dragging and dropping means that more time can be spent modeling and comparing different possible scenarios to benefit students and staff. Principal Gonyan added:

“I have never enjoyed creating the schedule as much as I have this year! The State of Vermont was offering a free trial. After using the program, I will definitely continue with it in future years.”

Principals and assistant principals who have used DMSchedules software for their school scheduling as part of this program have been tremendously enthusiastic. Managing the many constraints of time, space, and resources can be a daunting task, exacerbated in recent years by staff shortages and remote learning; but with DMSchedules, principals have enjoyed the ease with which they could quickly model schedule ideas and gather feedback from staff while embedding best practices and the strategic goals of the school and district. Principal Gonyan said, in summary:

“This product has transformed the way my school thinks about scheduling. It has allowed better communication, increased consistency in programming, and maximized staffing. The program is easy to use and flexible. Most importantly, the service and support offered is outstanding and 100% responsive to feedback and requests.”

The Vermont Agency of Education understood the importance of maximizing the precious resource of time in order to achieve its objective of enhancing the effectiveness, availability, and equitable delivery of services to students who require additional support. While scheduling and time management may seem mundane and lack the allure of new curricula and new interventions, time is a precious resource. Time is fundamental to being able to implement successfully the interventions and supports so critical for students. ♦