

# District Management Group's 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Summit

Over 200 district leaders from 75 districts across 24 states gathered in New York City in March for District Management Group's 21st annual Summit. This Summit also marked District Management Group's 20th anniversary of partnering with districts to forge sustainable improvement in public education.

As always, our two-and-a-half days were filled with an array of opportunities to learn, share, and collaborate. Here, we provide some highlights of our time together.



**John J-H Kim**  
Founder and CEO, District Management Group

## Opening Session and Case Study

As has become our tradition, our opening session began with a review of the state of the sector presented by DMG CEO John Kim, as well as the results of a survey of our members regarding their key challenges. (See p. 56 for highlights from the State of the Sector presentation.) This framing set the stage and provided focus for the discussions over the next two days.

"What conditions make it possible for a team to rise above routine performance to meet a challenge?" is the question we then explored. We identified the conditions necessary for success as well as the barriers to surmount, and then discussed how to apply these lessons to schools to get extraordinary results. Led by John Kim, the group later discussed a Harvard Business School case study to elicit ways to lead and manage teams to encourage innovation and creative, collaborative problem solving. Given the myriad challenges to public education, rising above routine performance through innovation and problem-solving is essential to deliver strong results for students.

## Keynote

Deborah Bial, president and founder of the Posse Foundation and MacArthur Genius Award winner, delivered the keynote address focused on "Reframing Leadership for our Modern World: Diversity and Merit as Pillars of Success." Engaging participants in hands-on exercises, Bial shared examples of the work at Posse. She went on to discuss her groundbreaking work on identifying merit and finding ways to encourage talent that too often goes unidentified or overlooked.



**Deborah Bial**  
President and Founder, Posse Foundation

## Lessons from the Field

The Summit then included a series of sessions in which member districts shared their successes, lessons learned, and experiences.

### Delivering Higher Quality Mental Health Services at 30% of the Cost

Leaders from North Adams Public Schools (MA) and North Shore School District 112 (IL) shared how they were able to meet their students' mental health needs with no waitlists and were able to access health insurance funding, which reduced costs by as much as 70%. By partnering with Cartwheel Care, these districts successfully and cost-effectively provided students with rapid access to virtual, evidence-based therapy and psychiatry.



**Tom Simon**

Director of Student Support Services,  
North Adams Public Schools (MA)



**Michael Lubelfeld**

Superintendent,  
North Shore School District 112 (IL)



**Joe English**

Co-Founder and CEO,  
Cartwheel Care



**Sarah Nichols**

LICSW, MEd, Senior Program Director,  
Cartwheel Care



### Effective Resource Allocation and Budgeting

With ESSER funding coming to an end, many districts across the country will be facing a funding cliff. With this budgetary pressure, ensuring resources are being allocated effectively to maximize results for students will be more important than ever. Leaders from Kyrene School District (AZ) and the School District of Lancaster (PA) shared how they used Academic-ROI (Academic Return on Investment) to determine which programs were working most effectively and efficiently. Both districts had teams participate in DMG's Academic-ROI Institute, which helped them not only learn the A-ROI methodology but also develop stronger cross-departmental collaboration, which better positioned these districts to embed this approach moving forward.

Fort Worth Independent School District (TX) used Academic-ROI analyses to modify their allocation models to ensure their staffing and funding would best support the district's strategic priorities to deliver strong results for students. This was particularly important for the district which was facing declining enrollment, and hence declining revenue.

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**Academic-ROI helps us look at student outcomes differently. We want to be able to define success, examine the initiatives driving success, and determine what impact they are making, at what cost, and for whom.**

- Carmen Arrieta Candelaria, CFO, Fort Worth ISD (TX)



**Laura Toenjes**

Superintendent,  
Kyrene School District (AZ)



**Chris Herrmann**

Associate Superintendent/CFO,  
Kyrene School District (AZ)



**Matt Przywara**

Assistant Superintendent,  
School District of Lancaster (PA)



**Meghan Oakley-Henning**

Strategic Project Manager,  
School District of Lancaster (PA)



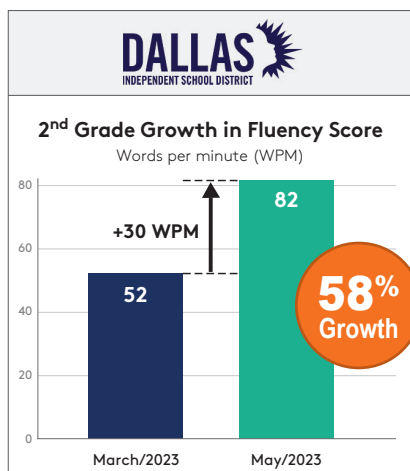
**Carmen Arrieta-Candelaria**

Chief Financial Officer, Fort Worth  
Independent School District (TX)



## Accelerating Learning in ELA

Leaders from Dallas Independent School District (TX), East Baton Rouge Parish School System (LA), and Griffin-Spalding County School System (GA) shared how they achieved remarkable improvement in ELA results for their students using the Breakthrough Results program, a unique combination of performance coaching, teamwork, actionable data, professional development, and short-cycle sprints toward highly focused goals.



**Mark Ramirez**  
Associate Superintendent,  
Region 1, Dallas Independent  
School District (TX)



**Salem Hussain**  
Executive Director,  
Dallas Independent  
School District (TX)



**Hilda Robinson**  
Instructional Specialists Manager,  
Dallas Independent  
School District (TX)



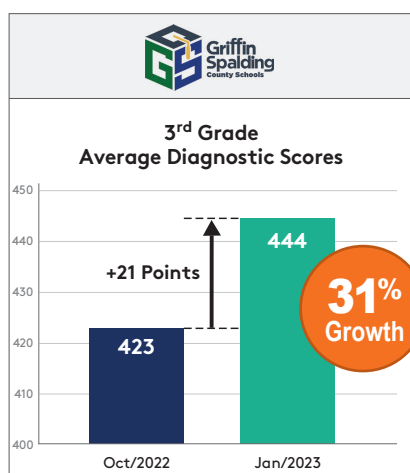
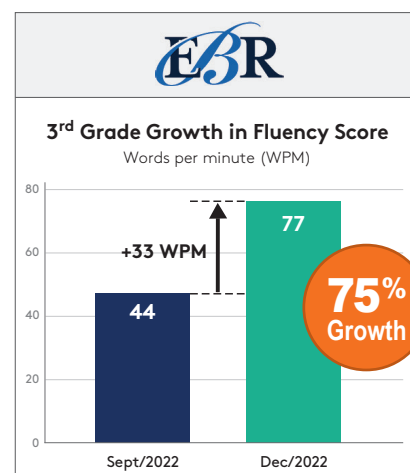
**Shenoa Warren**  
Chief of Academics and Literacy,  
East Baton Rouge Parish  
School System (LA)



**Erica Aguillard**  
Executive Director for School Leadership,  
East Baton Rouge Parish  
School System (LA)



**Amy Edwards**  
Literacy Coordinator,  
East Baton Rouge Parish  
School System (LA)



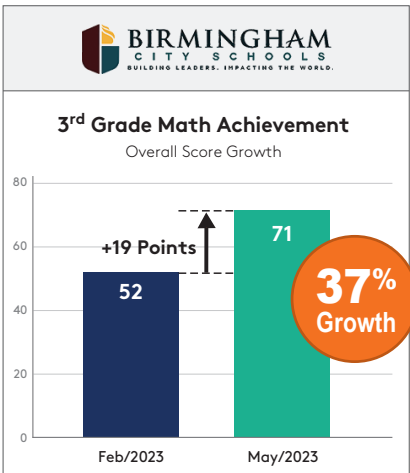
**Tiffany Taylor**  
Executive Director of Teacher and Leader  
Effectiveness, Griffin-Spalding  
County School System (GA)

**“We saw tremendous results with students. The BTR program also increased a collaborative teacher advocacy and their desire to get together and problem-solve.”**

- Tiffany Taylor

# Accelerating Learning in Math

Leaders from Birmingham City Schools (AL) and Providence Public School District (RI) discussed how they used the same unique approach to help their students achieve extraordinary results in math. Superintendent Mark Sullivan from Birmingham City Schools shared that empowering teachers while supporting them to develop the necessary skills and strategies has been pivotal in driving student success.



**Pamela Williams**  
Interim Chief Academics Officer,  
Birmingham City Schools (AL)



**Kecia Chapman**  
Executive Director of Assessment,  
Accountability and Research,  
Birmingham City Schools (AL)

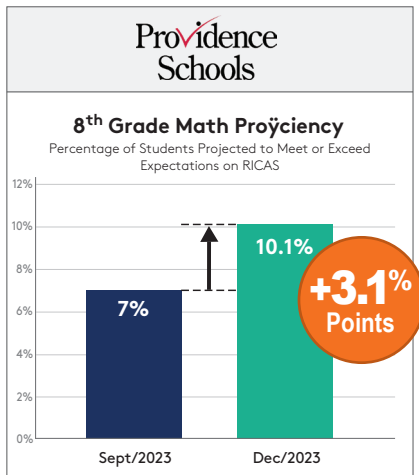
## Providence Schools



**Joan Jackson**  
Senior Advisor to the Superintendent,  
Providence Public School District (RI)



**Craig Creller**  
Literacy Coordinator, Chief of  
School Improvement and Innovation,  
Providence Public School District (RI)



# A Strategic Plan to Spark Transformation

Birmingham City Schools (AL) and Lincoln Public Schools (NE), two very different districts with different challenges, shared how they both actively engaged stakeholders to craft highly focused, actionable strategic plans that now drive day-to-day work in their districts, guide resource allocation, and create focus and accountability. Integrating diverse perspectives from educators, administrators, students, parents, and community leaders during the design and review stages of strategic planning provided the multidimensional perspective necessary to effectively address complex educational challenges.



**Mark Sullivan**  
Superintendent,  
Birmingham City Schools (AL)



**Paul Gausman**  
Superintendent,  
Lincoln Public Schools (NE)





## Optimizing Secondary Schedules to Maximize Outcomes for Students

Medford Public Schools (MA), Reading School District (PA), and Wilmette Public Schools District 39 (IL) all worked to optimize their secondary schedules through a methodical process of setting clear scheduling goals, examining bell schedules, reviewing course offerings, and analyzing the use of staff time. These districts shared how a focus on clear goals and intentional, strategic use of time can enable districts to achieve more for their students. They also discussed leveraging the DMG Change Management Framework with school and district stakeholders to successfully adopt redesigned schedules.



**Peter Cushing**

Assistant Superintendent,  
Medford Public Schools (MA)



**Wanda Gonzalez-Crespo**

Assistant Superintendent for School  
Improvement, Reading School District (PA)



**Kari Cremascoli**

Superintendent,  
Wilmette Public Schools District 39 (IL)



## Transforming Special Education Services Through Scheduling

Special education scheduling complexities often result in a significant loss of instructional time and get in the way of teaching and learning best practices. Barrington 220 School District (IL) and Phoenixville Area School District (PA) both leveraged DMSchedules special education scheduling software to ensure IEP compliance and streamline the creation and coordination of special education schedules, optimizing the use of both staff and student time. District and school leaders highlighted how the technology transformed scheduling from a technical task to a strategic tool and helped improve communication and collaboration school- and district-wide, leading to better student outcomes and more equitable workloads.



**Micah Korb**

Principal,  
Barrington 220 School District (IL)



**Jessica Kilmetz**

Assistant Superintendent,  
Phoenixville Area School District (PA)



## Where Have All the Kids Gone? Addressing Enrollment and Attendance

After examining the underlying issues affecting enrollment and attendance, San Antonio ISD (TX) shared how they addressed these challenges by working with EveryDay Labs. By leveraging a combination of behavioral science and best practices, the district successfully transformed its approach to attracting and retaining families, ultimately improving both enrollment and attendance.



**Jaime Aquino**

Superintendent, San Antonio  
Independent School District (TX)



**Patricia Salzmann**

Deputy Superintendent, San Antonio  
Independent School District (TX)



**Emily Bailard**

Chief Executive Officer,  
EveryDay Labs



**Nicole Bosworth**

Senior Director of Strategic Partnerships,  
EveryDay Labs



## Developing Systems for Success in Special Education

The achievement gap between students with and without disabilities persists. Chelmsford Public Schools (MA) and North Shore School District 112 (IL) discussed how a Special Education Opportunity Review, in partnership with DMG, helped them gain a deeper understanding of how students in special education were being served. Through the review, each district identified high-leverage opportunities to improve their special education services. North Shore School District 112 shared how it successfully moved from the Response to Intervention (RTI) supports it had in place to a new type of more coordinated, more encompassing Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS).



**Jay Lang**  
Superintendent,  
Chelmsford Public Schools (MA)



**Amy Reese**  
Director of Student Support Services,  
Chelmsford Public Schools (MA)



**Holly Colin**  
Assistant Superintendent of Student Services,  
North Shore School District 112 (IL)



## Next-Level Presentation and Communication Skills

Because effectively communicating with external and internal stakeholders is essential to the work in public education, veteran television producers joined us to share practical tips and best practices to enhance presentation and communication skills. They explored the power of speaking in your lowest comfortable voice register; the use of pitch, modulation, pacing, and effective pauses; awareness of what is not said but communicated through body language and gesturing; and key tips for handling Q&A.



**Mark Carter**  
Veteran media executive and  
television producer



**Jamie Corsi-Berna**  
Veteran award-winning producer  
for CNBC and leading  
Fortune 500 brands

## Transform Your District Through Student Leadership

Odessa School District (WA) shared how Lead4Change's free leadership development program for sixth through 12th graders helped build confident, motivated, and capable students. Working in teams, students complete a service learning project while putting into action the leadership lessons learned through Lead4Change's curriculum. Over 2 million students have participated in the Lead4Change program, and 40% of student participants showed statistically significant increases in self-efficacy, leadership, self-confidence, teamwork, perspective-taking, management, and leadership.



**Koula Callahan**  
Head of Marketing,  
Lead4Change



**Sarah Culver**  
Program Manager,  
Lead4Change



**Terri King**  
Former teacher,  
Odessa School District (WA)





## DMG's Superintendents' Strategy Summit—New York, 2024







NEW YORK  
MARCH  
2024

**Page 7: Top left:** Scott Rowe, Superintendent, Township High School District 214 (IL); **Top right:** Carmen Arrieta-Candelaria, Chief Financial Officer, Fort Worth Independent School District (TX); **Center:** Erica Aguillard, Executive Director for School Leadership, East Baton Rouge Parish School Board (LA); Shenoa Warren, Chief of Literacy, East Baton Rouge Parish School Board (LA); Salem Hussain, Executive Director, Dallas Independent School District (TX); **Bottom left:** Lisa-Renée Brown, Chief Financial Officer, Bedford Stuyvesant New Beginnings Charter School (NY); Paul Cruz former Superintendent, Austin ISD (TX); **Bottom right:** Amy Edwards, Literacy Coordinator and Erica Aguillard, Executive Director for School Leadership, East Baton Rouge Parish School Board (LA)

**This page: Top left:** Mark Sullivan, Superintendent, Birmingham City Schools (AL); Paul Gausman, Superintendent, Lincoln Public Schools (NE); **Top right:** Darren Kermes, Superintendent, Southwest Metro Intermediate 288 (MN); **Bottom:** Robert McBride, Superintendent, Southwest Metro Intermediate 288 (IL); Mike Lubelfeld, Superintendent, North Shore School District 112 (IL)