



**TEAM UP**

**BMC Special Topics Forum**

# Mel King South End Academy

## McKinley Schools

- **McKinley Prep - Peterborough St. (Fenway)**
- **McKinley South End Academy (Warren Ave.)**
- **McKinley Elementary (Warren Ave.)**
- **McKinley Middle (St. Mary's Street)**

# General School Structure

- 3 school sites - 4 distinct “schools” serving students K-12 and postgraduates
- All students have an IEP with Emotional Impairment as their primary disability
- Students are mostly cohorted
- Clinical supports are always available (squeaky wheel)
- Students have a full academic schedule (cohorted)
- Historically poor transition planning (postgraduate)

# Research Overview

- Special day schools, juvenile detention facilities, and other exclusionary educational settings that serve students with EBD are often under increased pressure to provide access to a standards-based curriculum.

# Literature Review

- Johnson et al., 2005 – Teacher stress is second only to police officers, and this study was on regular education teachers not teachers of EBD students
- Grossman (1980) – beliefs about the teaching of literature
- Leko and Mundy (2012) – special education students still need access to real literature despite their struggles to engage and access difficult texts.
- McConn (2016) – extensive reading curriculum over intensive reading practices recommended by the common core standards
- Mastropieri and colleagues (2015, 2012, 2010, 2009) – demonstrated EBD students in different contexts can learn and retain academic skills (persuasive writing) if given instructional time

# 4 Teacher Themes

- Theme 1: Unique pathway to teaching
  - Sub-theme: being called by name
- Theme 2: Pervasive Struggle
  - Sub-theme: Frustration
  - Sub-theme: High levels of stress
- Theme 3: Meaningful Work
  - Sub-theme: enjoy the work
  - Sub-theme: more than an English teacher
  - Sub-theme: It takes a village
- Theme 4: Searching for Success
  - Sub-theme: Professional autonomy and being self-taught
  - Sub-theme: Perseverance/resilience
  - Sub-theme: Positives over negatives
  - Sub-theme: Defining success

# Future Research and Directions

- **Case Studies** Warwick/Day Schools/Ivy Street (Brookline)
  - A fresh look at day schools, especially for older students. How are these institutions understood by students, teachers, families, administrators, districts and policy makers.

## **Teacher Recruitment/Retention**

- This study implies that non-traditional routes towards teaching is warranted rather than it being a concern.

## **Curriculum** EBD Students

- Curriculum is a broad topic. Research that inquires from high school practitioners with experience with secondary EBD students on the scope and sequence of content area curriculum.

# Implications for personal practice

- What are the trade-offs of having people that can engage with these students but maybe not have all the capabilities necessary to teach secondary English (or any subject matter)?
- How do we get teachers to engage in thinking about being better practitioners of English language arts? They need experience and modeling
- Teachers feelings of self-efficacy are more related to engaging struggling students then it is to teaching English language arts.
- Conversations (interviews) about teaching and learning quickly turned to discussions about handling problematic situations.



# How data relates to problem

- Teachers are able to manage stress extremely well (Johnson et al., (2005)
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- It takes a particular character type to be a teacher of EBD students (Prather-Jones, 2011; Billingsley et al., 2005).
- The dynamics between special education and regular education are difficult to manage even if one person is both the special education teacher and the regular education teacher.  
Frager & Wasburn-Moses