

Student Support Teams at Artemus Ward (PreK–8)

CLEVELAND METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

What are Student Support Teams? Student Support Teams (SST) are dedicated to supporting a school's highest-need students, including identifying relevant academic and/or behavioral interventions, and monitoring progress over time.

Context: Principal Myslenski and his staff have restructured Artemus Ward's SST to provide better support to the school's highest-need students. This cross-functional team now works together frequently to identify appropriate interventions and track progress over time for approximately 30 children.

Members meet for 50 minutes twice every Monday to assess the needs of new students and monitor the progress of students already on the team's caseload. Integrating these meetings into the school's schedule and ensuring strong facilitation has significantly increased the SST's ability to develop timely interventions for students, provide direct support to teachers, and engage parents.

Artemus Ward Fast Facts (2015)

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| • Student enrollment: 474 | • Budget: \$4.6M | • Grade 3 ELA proficiency: 51% |
| • Special education: 13% | • Dollars per pupil: \$9.8K | • Grade 3 math proficiency: 32% |
| • ELL: 9% | • Student : Teacher ratio: 15:1 | |
| • FRPL: 100% | • Student : Instructional staff ratio (teacher + TA): 14:1 | |

MAKING IT WORK: RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS



PEOPLE

- **Cross-functional team structure:** Each SST meeting typically includes the following individuals, each of whom plays a distinct role on the team:
 - *Principal:* All new referrals go through Principal Myslenski first, in the form of an SST Referral Form. He decides if the SST is the appropriate venue to address the student's needs. If so, he submits it to the school psychologist. Principal Myslenski also attends all SST meetings to provide input on potential interventions and to stay updated on student progress.

- o *School Psychologist*: The psychologist acts as the meeting facilitator at each SST meeting to ensure discussion results in decisions and action plans. The role also includes:
 - Providing recommendations on which evidence-based interventions might best meet a student’s needs.
 - Taking meeting notes into a shared Google Doc that all members can access.
 - Mediating during the meeting as needed.
 - Scheduling any follow-up meetings needed outside regular SST meetings.
 - Any follow-up needed with the student’s parent, doctor, or other relevant service providers.
- o *Intervention specialist*: This individual supports the psychologist in facilitating discussion, provides input on interventions, and establishes the appropriate progress-monitoring method and frequency. He/she conducts check-ins with all teachers one week prior to the follow-up SST meeting to ensure that progress-monitoring data will be in an appropriate form for the rest of the team to quickly analyze. Teachers are expected to use a common document known as the SST Intervention Tracking Form, for this purpose.
- o *Gen Ed teacher*: The teacher of the referred student provides information on what interventions have been attempted already, and participates in the discussion about what to try next. He/she administers agreed-upon interventions, keeps track of the student’s progress, and presents relevant data to the SST during follow-up meetings. If the child referred to the SST is in a self-contained special education environment, his/her primary teacher will play this role in the meeting.
- o *Parents*: Parents are invited to all SST meetings that are relevant to their child.
- **Parent involvement**: Input from parents is prioritized during the SST process. Parents are invited by letter and by phone, and if they can’t attend the meeting in person or don’t arrive on time, they are called directly with the hope that they can participate over the phone.
- **Classroom coverage**: One of the two SST meetings that occurs every Monday takes place during the school day at 2:00 p.m. A reading intervention teacher is available during this time to provide coverage for Gen Ed teachers who need to participate in the SST.



TIME

- **Twice-weekly SST meetings:** Artemus Ward's SST meets twice every Monday at 8:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. for 50 minutes each time. The principal's schedule is structured to protect this time specifically for the SST. The 8:30 a.m. meeting takes place as part of teachers' 200 professional time minutes, and it requires no supplementary classroom coverage. The team may also schedule emergency meetings for students of severe concern during teachers' planning periods and through class coverage as needed. The frequency of SST meetings ensures that follow-up on each student can take place approximately every six weeks.
- **Individual preparation time:** Several members of the SST have responsibilities outside the official meeting that require additional time:
 - Principal's review of SST Referral Forms, follow-up as needed and submission to psychologist: *50 minutes/week*
 - Psychologist's administrative work outside the SST, including follow up with parents and others, scheduling supplementary meetings, researching evidence-based interventions and preparing any relevant materials for discussion: *100 minutes/week*.
 - Gen Ed teacher's time outside the classroom to prepare to implement student interventions, consolidate progress-monitoring data into the SST Intervention Tracking Form and discuss with the intervention specialist: *one to two hours/student for each six week intervention cycle*
 - Intervention specialist's follow-up with Gen Ed teacher on progress-monitoring data: *10-20 minutes/teacher/week*
- **Targeted catch-up time:** Before the SST's meetings were scheduled twice a week, it was difficult for members to manage the student caseload. To catch up on the initial backlog, the team spent one full school day at the start of the school year making sure they were up to date on ongoing monitoring efforts and to process new referrals. This upfront investment made ongoing maintenance efforts more manageable as the year proceeded.



MONEY

- **Assessments and data systems:** Staff at Artemus Ward use assessment results from NWEA and STAR to help determine which students should be referred the SST, and related data reports also support progress-monitoring efforts. These assessments and accompanying reports are provided by CMSD and come at no direct cost to the school.

PROCEDURES

- **Clear meeting agenda:** Each SST follows a similar protocol to ensure time is used efficiently and that it results in an actionable plan for the Gen Ed teacher to implement. The agenda typically includes the following when a new student is referred:
 - Review of child's history and current needs by Gen Ed teacher and parent, including review of relevant data (medical/developmental history, attendance, grades, schools attended, and NWEA/STAR data) and summary of what interventions have been tried so far. At least one laptop is available to check supplementary data as needed: *20 minutes*.
 - Discuss potential interventions and determine which will be implemented over the next six weeks: *15 minutes*.
 - Establish how progress will be monitored, including what type of data will be collected and at what frequency: *10 minutes*.
 - Schedule when the follow up meeting will occur (typically six weeks later): *5 minutes*.

LEARNING FROM IMPLEMENTATION

- **Building time into the schedule and assigning a facilitator:** Before Principal Myslenski arrived and integrated the SST's work into the master schedule, it struggled to meet regularly, and there were ongoing challenges in record keeping. Ensuring twice-weekly meetings were built into the schedule and setting up the psychologist to act as meeting facilitator has significantly increased the effectiveness of the team.
- **Principal participation:** Principal Myslenski's regular attendance at the SST demonstrates the importance of the team's work to the rest of the staff. When decisions arise that require his approval, such as changes to a student's schedule, he is able to provide input immediately. This helps prevent delays in the implementation of student interventions.

RESULTS

The school team is currently updating the monitoring system to revisit the effectiveness of the SST process thus far this year. So far, Principal Myslenski reports reductions on the following:

- The number of students being referred for a Multi-Factored Evaluation.
- The number of students removed from the classroom for behavioral disruptions.
- The number of chronically absent students.