BOARD MEMO – ACTION ITEM

PUTNAM COUNTY COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT #535
Providing Foundations Together, Cultivating Individual Growth

To: Board of Education

From: Cody Martzluf, Superintendent
Moriah Mott, Primary School Principal

Date: Tuesday, November 17, 2026

RE: Primary School Math Interventionist Position

Recommendations:

Approve the creation of a Primary School Math Interventionist Position for the 2027-2028 school year.

Background:

- Mrs. Mott and I are recommending that the Board of Education approve the creation of a full-time K–2 Math Interventionist position at Putnam County Primary School beginning with the 2027–2028 school year. This would be a certified teaching position.

- One of our primary academic goals is to ensure students leave second grade with a strong foundation in mathematics. Foundational skills such as number sense, mathematical operations, math facts, and computation are essential for success as students progress into more complex mathematical concepts in later grades.

- Early intervention is one of the most important investments we can make in a student's academic success. Research consistently demonstrates the importance of identifying and addressing learning difficulties during the early elementary years. Mathematics is cumulative, meaning students build upon previously learned concepts as they advance through grade levels. When foundational skills are not mastered early, learning gaps can become increasingly difficult to overcome as mathematical concepts become more complex.

- By identifying students who are struggling in kindergarten, first, or second grade and providing targeted instruction immediately, we have a much greater opportunity to close learning gaps before they become significant barriers to academic success. Rather than waiting until students are several grade levels behind, our goal is to intervene early and provide students with the skills and confidence necessary to succeed.

Rational for the Position:

- The addition of a dedicated Math Interventionist would strengthen our ability to provide targeted academic support and enrichment opportunities for students in kindergarten through second grade.

- Currently, much of our Tier 2 math intervention is provided by paraprofessionals. While our paraprofessionals do an excellent job supporting students, interventions can be inconsistent when staff members are absent or reassigned to address other needs within the building. This sometimes results in missed intervention time or classroom teachers having to adjust their schedules to provide additional support.

- As a quick reminder on the different Tiers of Intervention:
    - Tier 1 – Core Instruction: High-quality, research-based instruction provided to all students in the general education classroom.
    - Tier 2 – Targeted Intervention: Additional small-group instruction for students who need extra support beyond regular classroom instruction. Student progress is monitored to determine the effectiveness of interventions.

    - Tier 3 – Intensive Intervention: More individualized, frequent, and intensive instruction for students with significant learning difficulties who have not made sufficient progress with Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports. Progress is closely monitored, and instruction is adjusted based on student needs.

- A dedicated Math Interventionist would provide several benefits:
    - Early Intervention: Identify and address mathematical learning gaps at the earliest possible stage, before students fall further behind their peers.
    - Targeted Academic Support: Provide consistent Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions through small-group and individualized instruction.
    - Improved Student Achievement: Strengthen foundational math skills that students will rely upon throughout their academic careers.
    - Consistent RtI Services: Establish a more structured and consistent approach to math Response to Intervention (RtI) across all K–2 classrooms.
    - Progress Monitoring: Collaborate with classroom teachers to identify student needs, monitor academic progress, and adjust instructional strategies based on student performance.
    - Special Education Support: Strengthen general education interventions, potentially reducing unnecessary special education referrals by addressing learning difficulties before they become more significant.
    - Student Enrichment: Provide additional learning opportunities for students who have mastered grade-level expectations and are ready for more challenging mathematical concepts.

Financial Considerations:

- We anticipate being able to fund this position through personnel savings resulting from three teacher retirements at the conclusion of the 2026–2027 school year.

- As these retiring teachers are replaced with new hires at lower salary levels, the district anticipates generating salary savings that could offset some or potentially all of the cost of the Math Interventionist position.

- Additionally, if the district receives an increase in federal Title grant funding, we could explore utilizing a portion of those additional funds to support this position. This could further reduce the financial impact on the district's local operating funds.

- This presents an opportunity to strategically reinvest personnel savings and potentially leverage additional federal resources to expand academic support for students while minimizing the impact on the district's operating budget. Final costs will depend on the salaries and benefits of the new hires and the availability of eligible grant funding.

Recommendation:

- The earlier we identify and address academic difficulties, the greater the opportunity we have to positively influence a student's long-term educational success. Waiting until students reach the upper elementary grades to address foundational math deficiencies makes intervention more challenging and can require more intensive resources.

- This position represents a proactive investment in our youngest learners. By providing consistent, high-quality math interventions during these critical early years, we can help ensure more students leave Putnam County Primary School with the foundational skills necessary to be successful in the grades that follow.

- Utilizing anticipated savings from upcoming retirements, along with potential additional federal Title grant funding, provides an opportunity to strengthen academic services while remaining fiscally responsible.