

3-1-1981

## Third Annual Report of the Independent Evaluation of the California Master Plan for Special Education

Patricia Craig  
patricia.mckenzie@sjsu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/pols\\_pub](https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/pols_pub)



Part of the [Education Policy Commons](#), and the [Special Education and Teaching Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Patricia Craig. "Third Annual Report of the Independent Evaluation of the California Master Plan for Special Education" *SRI International* (1981).

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Political Science at SJSU ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of SJSU ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@sjsu.edu](mailto:scholarworks@sjsu.edu).

# INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE CALIFORNIA MASTER PLAN FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

## Third Annual Report

March 1981

Presented to the State Department of Education  
for transmittal to the Governor and the  
California State Legislature

SRI International  
333 Ravenswood Avenue  
Menlo Park, California 94025  
(415) 326-6200  
Cable: SRI INTL MPK  
TWX: 910-373-1246



INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE CALIFORNIA MASTER PLAN FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SRI March 1981

**SRI**

**International**



**INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF  
THE CALIFORNIA MASTER PLAN  
FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**Third Annual Report**

March 1981

Contributing Authors:

Patricia A. Craig, Project Director  
Ann Hershberger, Research Analyst  
Michael Machover, Policy Analyst  
Christine Miller, Research Analyst  
Eleanor L. Myers, Research Analyst  
Mary Wujek, Research Analyst

Presented to the State Department of Education  
for transmittal to the Governor and the  
California State Legislature

State of California Contract 8269

SRI Project 8169

This evaluation is mandated and funded by the California State Legislature under Assembly Bill 1250 and SB 1870. Views or conclusions expressed in this report should not be interpreted as necessarily reflecting the official position of the sponsoring agency.

## CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES . . . . .	v
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY . . . . .	vii
INTRODUCTION. . . . .	1
COMPARISON OF ENROLLMENT AND PLACEMENT PATTERNS IN 1978-79 AND 1979-80 . . . . .	5
Overview . . . . .	5
Special Education Enrollments . . . . .	6
Findings from Interviews . . . . .	14
Legislative Limits on Placement for Funding Purposes . . . . .	18
Summary of Findings . . . . .	19
Recommendations . . . . .	21
RECORD KEEPING, DATA MANAGEMENT, AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES . . . . .	23
Overview. . . . .	23
Local Record Keeping and Management Information Systems . . . . .	23
Local Evaluation Activities . . . . .	27
The State Role in Evaluation . . . . .	31
Differences Between Local and State Policy Needs . . . . .	32
Planning for Master Plan Sunset Review . . . . .	34
Summary of Findings . . . . .	35
Recommendations . . . . .	36
THE ROLE OF THE RESOURCE SPECIALIST . . . . .	39
Overview . . . . .	39
Case Loads . . . . .	42
Involvement in Mandated Activities . . . . .	42
Resource Specialists' Use of Time . . . . .	48
The Resource Specialist Program from the Regular Classroom Teachers' Perspective . . . . .	53
Problems and Suggestions for Change . . . . .	56
Summary of Findings . . . . .	60
Recommendations . . . . .	61
CONDITIONS THAT AFFECT THE SUCCESS OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT . . . . .	63
Overview . . . . .	63
School Site Management of Staff Development Activities . . . . .	64

Planning, Assessment, and Evaluation Activities . . . . .	66
Formal Staff Development Budget . . . . .	67
Administrative Support and Organization . . . . .	68
State Technical Assistance . . . . .	69
Summary of Findings . . . . .	70
Recommendations . . . . .	70
 SCHOOL EFFORT TO INFORM AND INVOLVE PARENTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM PLANNING . . . . .	 73
Overview . . . . .	73
The Attitude of Special Education Personnel . . . . .	75
Difficulties in Achieving Parent Involvement . . . . .	76
Methods Used To Inform and Involve Parents . . . . .	78
Lack of Uniformity in Information Distributed to Parents . . . . .	82
Summary of Findings . . . . .	88
Recommendations . . . . .	88
 THE USE OF OUTSIDE RESOURCES TO SERVE SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS . . . . .	 91
Overview . . . . .	91
Respondents' Comments About Various Agencies . . . . .	93
Use of Other Nonschool Resources . . . . .	96
Summary of Findings and Recommendations . . . . .	96
 APPENDICES	
A - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FROM SECOND ANNUAL REPORT . . . . .	99
B - QUESTIONNAIRES ADMINISTERED TO REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS, RESOURCE SPECIALISTS, AND LDG TEACHERS . . . . .	111

TABLES

1	Respondents to Interviews and Questionnaires . . . . .	2
2	Enrollment of Special Education Students in the Study Areas in 1978-79 and 1979-80 . . . . .	7
3	Percentage of Total School Population Identified for Special Education Programs . . . . .	8
4	Percentage of Students in Regular Schools Identified for Special Education Programs . . . . .	10
5	Percentages of Communicatively Handicapped and Learning Handicapped Students by Program Placement. . . . .	12
6	Number and Percentage of Students Served in Resource Specialist Program in MP Areas During the 1978-79 and 1979-80 School Years . . . . .	15
7	Projected Total State Enrollment in Resource Specialist Program Based on Actual MP 1978-79 and 1979-80 Enrollments .	16
8	Comparison of Student Placements with Legislative Limits for Designated Instruction Services, Resource Specialist Program, and Special Classes During the 1979-80 School Year . . . . .	20
9	Site Visit Record Review of MIS Reliability . . . . .	26
10	Number and Percentage of Special Education Students Served in Master Plan Areas for the 1979-80 School Year . . . . .	40
11	Comparison of Average Case Loads for Resource Specialists and LDG Teachers . . . . .	42
12	Percentage of Resource Specialists Involved in Various Activities, as Reported During the 1980 Site Visits, Compared with Responses of LDG Teachers in NMP Areas . . . . .	43
13	Percentage of Resource Specialists Responding to 1979 Survey Who Participated or Believed They Should Participate in Various Activities Compared with Activities of LDG Teachers .	45
14	Percentage of Teachers Coordinating Services for Special Education Students . . . . .	47
15	Summary of Time Spent on Activities by Resource Specialists in Master Plan Areas During the 1979-80 School Year . . . . .	49

16	Activities that Resource Specialists Would Prefer To Spend Time On . . . . .	50
17	Activities that Resource Specialists Would Like To Spend Less Time On . . . . .	52
18	Resource Specialists' Suggestions for Changing Their Job . .	52
19	Resource Specialists' Reports of the Availability of an Aide	53
20	Average Amount of Time That Regular Classroom Teachers Spent with the Resource Specialist . . . . .	54
21	Degree to Which the Regular Classroom Teachers Believe the Resource Specialist Is Valuable in Master Plan Areas . . . .	55
22	Percentage of Parents Who Believed That They Should Be Involved in Activities Related to Their Child's Special Education Program . . . . .	77
23	Composite Overview of the Types of Local Community Organizations and the Types of Services or Materials They Provided Special Education Students . . . . .	97

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the Third Annual Report on the independent evaluation of the California Master Plan for Special Education, which was mandated in Assembly Bill 1250 and Senate Bill 1870. It contains the findings from follow-up studies in six Master Plan (MP) and four non-Master Plan (NMP) areas during 1979-80. The findings are based on responses of administrators, support personnel, and special education and regular classroom teachers to questionnaires and to questions asked during interviews conducted by SRI staff members during 1-week visits to each of the 10 sites. The following topics were explored in greater depth during the year:

- . Comparison of enrollment and placement patterns for 1978-79 and 1979-80.
- . Local evaluation efforts, record keeping, and data management.
- . The role of the resource specialist.
- . Inservice training for the regular classroom teacher.
- . Parent involvement and participation.
- . Interagency agreements and the use of other types of outside resources.

### Comparison of Enrollment and Placement Patterns in 1978-79 and 1979-80

Given that an important basis for sound policy planning is the ability of decisionmakers and program administrators to identify a program's target population, the present confusion and ambiguity regarding eligibility and identification of the learning handicapped (LH) population is an issue of great policy consequence at both state and local levels. This is particularly true because LH students constitute the major portion of the special education population, representing approximately 62% and 47%, respectively, of the total special education populations in our sample of MP and NMP areas.

To gain a better understanding of the dynamics of identifying the target population, particularly students classified as LH, we discussed the issue with administrators, special education teachers, and special education support staff in each of the 10 sites visited during 1980 and with representatives of other state departments of education. We also analyzed enrollment and placement data. The site visits, interviews, and analyses revealed that:

- . On the average, areas that have been implementing Master Plan for 4 to 5 years (MP1) showed a stabilization in their special education



populations during the 1979-80 school year. One exception to this was an area where the percentage of identified students increased by 4.18% to a total of 12.64%. This growth was due almost entirely to an increase in the percentage of students identified as LH. (p. 6)

- . MP areas that have been in the program for only 1 or 2 years showed substantial growth in the percentage of special education students. This growth, as was the case in MP1 areas, was tied to the increase in the number of LH students identified. (p. 8)
- . In NMP areas, an overall decrease occurred in the percentage of students identified. Although in 57% of these areas the population declined slightly, in every case the number of students identified as LH increased. (p. 8)
- . On the average, in MP areas approximately 2.5% more of the total school population was identified as LH than in NMP areas, suggesting possible differences in identification and assessment practices as well as in possible incentives and in the funding formula that may encourage particular types of identification practices or program placements. (p. 9)
- . The teachers, administrators, and support staff interviewed agreed that the LH population will continue to grow, given the present ambiguities about eligibility. (p. 14)
- . Flexibility and subjectivity built into current LH identification and assessment practices across districts result in students' being identified as LH in one district but being regarded as ineligible in another. (pp. 14-17)
- . Of the areas already implementing Master Plan, 65% exceed the Resource Specialist Program (RSP) placement limit of 4% specified in SB 1870. (p. 19)
- . The lack of consistent state data collection practices carried out over a number of years seriously impedes state policy and program planning efforts. (p. 13)
- . Because enrollment and program information is not collected separately for the elementary and secondary populations, neither differences in identification and placement practices between these two levels nor future secondary-level program and fiscal impacts can be evaluated. (p. 13)
- . Relatively small differences in the percentage of students identified and served in the RSP have significant fiscal impacts. Every 1% increase in the proportion of students served in the RSP results in a dollar increase of approximately \$28 million. This emphasizes the need for accurate reporting of student enrollments. (p. 14)

The following four major recommendations evolved from our exploration of enrollment patterns and practices in the identification of the LH population:

- . For purposes of long-range policy and program planning, the state should collect, analyze, and evaluate enrollment data separately for elementary and secondary students.
- . State reporting forms should remain consistent over at least a 5-year period so that comparative studies can be made against a consistent data base.
- . The state should develop criteria for the identification of students with specific learning disabilities so as to ensure uniform identification practices across districts. Development of such criteria will provide the structure for defining the target population that is necessary for monitoring, enforcement, evaluation, and planning purposes.
- . The state should explore possible fiscal incentives and disincentives implicit in the Master Plan funding formula that may influence identification and placement practices.

#### Record Keeping, Data Management, and Evaluation Activities

As the emphasis on providing equal opportunities for the disabled has evolved over the past decade, the size and complexity of special education programs in the state have grown, and special education administration has become a far more complicated task than it was in the past. Schools have joined together into larger governance units, the number of students identified as needing special education services has increased, and laws have been passed requiring the protection of parents' and students' civil rights through due process procedures. These factors have all combined to raise the visibility and interest in special education administration. Even with an overall decline in school enrollment throughout most of the state, the growth in special education programs most likely will continue as Master Plan is implemented across the state over the next few years. Recognition of these factors highlights the necessity for efficient data management techniques and the need for ongoing monitoring and evaluation at state and local levels.

Therefore, as part of our third-year activities, we studied the development and use of management information systems (MISs) in special education programs at various sites throughout the state, as well as the role of evaluation. Our findings are summarized as follows:

- . The accuracy of data reported to the state varies considerably in terms of pupil counts, flow-of-student information, and reports on personnel. (pp. 25-26)

- . The lack of clear directions for the proper recording of information leads to a misunderstanding of what is to be reported and in which categories, thus contributing to inaccuracies. (p. 26)
- . In the past, data collected have varied annually, so using state data to analyze trends over time is difficult. (p. 33)
- . Although the State Department of Education (SDE) gathers considerable information to satisfy federal reporting requirements, the potential uses of these data in terms of state long-range policy planning still remain untapped. (p. 33)
- . Local education agencies (LEAs) did not view local evaluation as a high priority, and only in one site did we find a high-quality, extensive, and comprehensive evaluation effort being conducted. (p. 27)
- . Where local evaluations were carried out, they generally were responsive to local political or public relations pressures, had a narrow program focus, and suffered from methodological problems. (pp. 27-28)
- . The following factors were found to contribute to the absence of evaluation activities at most sites: lack of administrative support, lack of budgets, lack of specific personnel assigned evaluation responsibility, and no obvious incentives to carry out local evaluations; no penalty exists for failing to carry out planned and approved projects. (p. 31)
- . Most respondents believed that local evaluations were of little use at the state level and believed that their reports had little effect on state special education planning. (p. 30)

The recommendations based on these findings are the following:

- . The state should increase its auditing activities so as to enhance the accuracy of reporting procedures at the local level.
- . Clearer directions for the reporting of information should be developed, with special care taken to assure that the types of information requested adequately reflect and are consistent with terms used in local special education programs.
- . A special effort should be expended to upgrade the quality of flow-of-student information, not only because it is a federal reporting requirement, but also because it is important to the state in terms of its utility for long-range policy planning.
- . The state should strive to collect the same information over a period of years. If changes are made, considerable lead time should be planned to allow for alteration of data collection routines.

- . Field-testing of new data reporting forms should be performed at local sites; this would indicate to LEAs the direction of change for any new data demands and would allow them to contribute to the design of the forms.
- . Whether information is new or old, feedback provided by the state to the LEAs would help to create understanding of the uses of state-required information, as well as inform LEAs where they stood with respect to the other LEAs in the state.
- . Currently, local evaluations are required under legislation. If these activities are an important state priority, consideration should be given to improving their quality and providing incentives to assure that they are performed. The state Evaluation Improvement Program (EIP) has taken steps to improve the quality of local evaluation, but such an improvement effort will require several years of operation before noticeable overall improvement is observed.
- . In view of the current level of quality and utility as well as the low priority placed on evaluation at the local level, we believe that in addition to continuing the EIP, the state should consider adopting an approach that in the short run would support local evaluations through a state-level competitive grant program open to LEAs, special education service regions, or other school administrative structures. Such a program would focus limited funds in a more productive way by allowing for the review of projects and the selection of those that were of the highest quality. It would also allow for more careful monitoring of local efforts, highlight state technical assistance needs, and be more cost beneficial in that accounting for local evaluation dollars could be more accurate.

### The Role of the Resource Specialist

In developing the Master Plan, the legislature recognized the needs for special education staff to provide regular teachers and parents with consultative help regarding students who were being integrated into the regular classroom as well as to assure that the students' programs were efficiently coordinated. The position of the resource specialist (RS) was created to fill these needs. The legislation specifies numerous responsibilities of the RS. Through the RSP, instruction and services are to be provided for special education students identified by an assessment team and assigned to a regular classroom for a majority of the school day. In addition, the RS is to provide information and assistance for special education students and their parents, as well as consultation, resource information, and materials for parents and regular education staff members. The RS is to coordinate the services provided for each student served through the RSP as well as assess each student's progress on a regular basis, revise IEPs, and refer students who are making inappropriate progress to the Educational Assessment Service.

The role of the RS was selected as an issue to explore in greater detail in 1980. Specifically, we determined the activities RSs are currently involved in and the tasks that RSs would prefer to spend more time on. The perspectives of the RS as well as of the regular classroom teachers and responsible local agency (RLA) directors are represented. Regarding the RSs' participation in required activities, the findings were as follows:

- . Elementary RSs reported an average case load of 26 students, and secondary RSs reported an average case load of 30 students. (p. 42)
- . Between 90 and 100% of both elementary and secondary RSs stated that they were involved in all activities outlined in AB 1250. (pp. 43-48))
- . Although all the RSs interviewed during the 1980 site visits had advised and consulted with regular classroom teachers, both the 1980 site visits and the 1979 survey data indicated that a lower percentage of the RSs had provided more formal inservice training at their schools. (p. 44))
- . The 1979 survey data showed that approximately 90% of RSs spent part of their time coordinating programs and services for special education students, and the 1980 data showed that a higher percentage of elementary RSs than secondary RSs (75% and 65%, respectively) coordinated services for students in addition to the students they were instructing. (pp. 44-45)
- . RSs appear to spend more time on noninstructional activities than the total special education teacher population. The RSs reported spending about two-thirds of their contractual time working directly with students and 8.4 hours per week on special education paperwork. (pp. 48-49)
- . Ninety-five percent of both elementary and secondary RSs expressed their desire to decrease paperwork related to administrative activities, and 40% of both groups wanted to decrease paperwork related to instruction. Less than 10% of the RSs wanted to decrease the amount of time spend in either direct instruction or advising and consulting with regular classroom teachers. (pp. 49-50)
- . Ninety-six percent of the elementary RSs and 81% of the secondary RSs reported that they already had an aide for at least three-quarters of a day. More than 50% of both elementary and secondary RSs in the 1980 site visits requested more clerical assistance. Most of the RLA directors recognized the need for additional clerical assistance. (p. 51)
- . Secondary RSs reported using their aides a greater percentage of the time for clerical duties than did elementary RSs. (pp. 51-53)

- . Ninety-eight percent of the regular classroom elementary teachers and 92% of the secondary teachers with special education students in their classrooms stated that they met with the RS and found this valuable. More time was spent discussing the students' academic, social, and personal needs than in discussing special education procedures. (p. 54)
- . Elementary teachers viewed the RS as more valuable than did secondary teachers. (p. 54)

On the basis of this information on the role of the RS, we offer the following recommendations for improving the RSP:

- . Provide clerical assistance for resource specialists during peak paperwork periods.
- . Change the title "instructional aide" to "special education tutor."
- . When RSs are split between schools, provide additional tutorial help for students.
- . Develop time and staff management seminars for RSs.

#### Conditions That Affect the Success of Staff Development

The Second Annual Report identified some serious shortcomings in special education staff development. Although more than 85% of the special education teachers reported that they had received inservice training, less than one-third of the regular classroom teachers serving special education students in their classes had received special education training during 1978-79. Thus, while staff development opportunities appeared to be plentiful for special education staff members, the opposite was true for regular classroom teachers. During 1979-80, one of our objectives was to describe how RLAs or districts provided training in special education techniques for the regular classroom teachers. We found that the success of inservice training is related to the following conditions:

- . School site management of staff development activities and RLA management of planning, assessment, and evaluation activities.
- . Formal staff development budgets.
- . Local administrative support, organization, and provision of inservice training.
- . State technical assistance.

All these conditions need not be present in a successful program, but each is important and policies could promote their incorporation into staff development planning and implementation.

The findings from our 1979-80 interviews regarding staff development were as follows:

- . Regular classroom teachers responded most favorably to school site staff development activities. (p. 64)
- . Although staff development planning, assessment, and evaluation activities were carried out at the RLA level, effective implementation seems to depend on school site planning, assessment, and evaluation as well. (pp. 64-65)
- . The most effective form of staff development from the point of view of the regular classroom teachers takes place informally when the RS consults with them regarding specific classroom problems and specific student needs. (p. 64)
- . Formal staff development budgets did not exist in most areas including RLAs. Where they did exist, the budgets appeared to be based on spending \$3 to \$11 per special education student, which included the staff development coordinator's salary, speakers' fees, and substitute teacher and materials costs. Thus, an estimate of state costs for local implementation of staff development, based on current practice, would range from \$965,000 to \$3,540,000. (pp. 67-68)
- . In only 3 of the 10 areas visited was a full-time staff development specialist employed to coordinate staff development activities. (pp. 68-69)
- . Staff development specialists praised the state's coordination of networking meetings for staff development personnel, but they reported that the quality of SDE staff development presentations for teachers was uneven and therefore that they could not depend on the state's offerings. In addition, most SDE sessions were found to be too general and too elementary for local staffs and consequently did not meet local needs. (p. 69)

The concept of school site management of special education services through the RS at each school site is a positive aspect of Master Plan that the state should continue to encourage and capitalize upon. The following recommendations emphasize school site management of staff development activities, support and expand the RS's consulting activities, and encourage state and RLA accountability for staff development:

- . Currently, the School Improvement Program (SIP) only requires a general staff development component; thus, schools are free to include or exclude special education as a topic area in their plans. The state should consider integrating special education activities into the SIP, which will enhance the staffs' awareness

of the need for discarding the idea of a two-level (special education and regular education) system.

- . The concept of Child Study Teams appears to be well received at the local level, and the state might consider strengthening its technical assistance program and promoting this concept.
- . If the training of regular classroom teachers is a high state priority, funds should be specifically allocated for this purpose and local areas should be required to submit expenditure reports documenting the source of funds and all related expenditures so that determining how much is actually being spent on this activity will be possible.
- . SDE's efforts to coordinate networking meetings should be continued but the state should either reevaluate its state-sponsored staff development packages to improve their quality and make them more relevant to local needs or rely on locally developed programs.

#### School Effort To Inform and Involve Parents in Special Education Program Planning

Many aspects of California's Master Plan for Special Education are matters of state policy, such as the use of a resource specialist to assist students in the regular classroom, governance issues, the establishment of local parent advisory committees, and funding formulas. However, parents' rights and issues of due process are matters of federal policy and are enforced through the U.S. Office of Civil Rights, under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Therefore, although these requirements are part of Master Plan legislation, they represent aspects of the program that must meet federal compliance standards and that must be implemented, regardless of whether or not a district is participating in the Master Plan program.

The Second Annual Report discussed parents' perceptions of the schools' or districts' efforts to provide information on special education programs and on parent involvement and concluded that although the letter of the law generally was being implemented [that is, parents were reporting high levels of attendance at meetings and participation in the individual education program (IEP) development process], the spirit of the law--informed consent and a true cooperative effort between schools and parents--was yet to be fully realized. The significance of this finding prompted us to pursue this topic in greater depth during 1980 by identifying areas that seemed to have been more effective in informing and involving parents. Therefore, we interviewed school personnel in each of the 10 sites visited during 1980 and collected any information that was available to parents, including statements of parents' rights and explanations of due process procedures.



The findings on schools' efforts to inform and involve parents were as follows:

- . Only 15 to 32% of the parents surveyed were fairly well informed about the law, their rights, IEPs, and procedures. (p. 75)
- . Parents reported a high level of involvement in activities required by law, although they did not appear to understand the significance of these activities. (p. 75)
- . Parents believed that the efforts of schools to involve them in their child's program were insufficient. (p. 74)
- . Most parents indicated that they wanted to contribute information about their child and assist in deciding on instructional goals and programs.(p. 77)
- . The schools' responsibility for informing parents of their rights and due process guarantees has diminished the school staffs' ability to create a cooperative atmosphere between the school and parent. (pp. 75-76)
- . Schools have encountered formidable problems in scheduling meetings with parents who work, have other commitments, or are simply uninterested in being involved. (pp. 76-77)
- . Only 4 of the 10 sites visited this year displayed a fairly aggressive effort to involve parents. (p. 78)
- . Each district, RLA, or county office was responsible for developing its own informational materials for parents, as well as IEP forms, and this has resulted in fragmented information and sometimes the omission of important information regarding parents' rights and due process. (pp. 82-87)

Our recommendations for assisting schools in informing and involving parents in the special education process are as follows:

- . The state could provide RLAs with valuable assistance by developing standard IEP, assessment, and parental rights forms. This could lead to considerable overall cost savings to the state by eliminating the need for development, printing, and revision of forms at the local level. It would also help to strengthen the compliance responsibility of the state by eliminating the wide variation in quality and content and would make state monitoring activities far easier.
- . Under current federal regulations, schools are required to make only a good faith effort to notify parents of meetings and to encourage their attendance. Acknowledging that some parents are simply uninterested in participating in these meetings, the state should develop a policy regarding what constitutes a "good faith

effort" on the part of schools so that the limited time available to teachers and staff is spent in the most productive manner.

### The Use of Outside Resources To Serve Special Education Students

In fulfilling its responsibility to coordinate related services for special education students, SDE has negotiated and signed interagency agreements with the following five agencies:

- . California Children's Services
- . Department of Rehabilitation
- . Department of Mental Health
- . California state hospitals
- . Regional centers for the developmentally disabled.

Before the development of these agreements, each agency already was providing services for specific types of children and was receiving funding from state and federal sources. The intent of interagency agreements was to provide a more integrated and coordinated approach to the provision of related services as required by federal law and to avoid any duplication of services.

During 1980, we explored the extent to which local district, county, and RLA personnel were aware of these state resources, as well as of private resources available to students, and the extent to which these services were being used. To collect this information, we interviewed school personnel identified as being knowledgeable about the types of outside resources available and used and agency representatives at the state level and selected branch offices. The interviews were focused on the following topics:

- . Knowledge about state and local agencies and organizations that might be called on for services.
- . The use of these organizations and the types of services being provided.
- . The cost for services and who paid (district, county, agency or organization, or parent).
- . The number and types of students being referred to and served by outside agencies or organizations.
- . Whether the district or RLA encountered any difficulties in obtaining services or cooperation.

The interviews indicated that state-level interagency agreements have not been as useful for coordinating services as had originally been hoped,

but they are certainly a necessary first step. Achieving intergovernmental cooperation in the coordination and provision of related services for handicapped students is very difficult because, in California, each agency is administratively and fiscally independent.

This review of the use of interagency agreements was only a small part of the overall study and is clearly an area that demands more focused attention. However, several issues of importance that require immediate attention are outlined as follows:

- . Because of state-level interagency commitments to provide services, the nonschool agencies should make a greater effort to ensure that services are provided more uniformly across regional offices.
- . The SDE's administrative role, fiscal responsibility, and enforcement authority should be clarified in law and become a part of the state-level agreements.
- . The state should consider requiring record keeping to identify the number and types of students receiving related services from outside agencies and the costs (either to the school or to the agency) for these services.
- . The development and negotiation of local agreements to support state-level agreements with noneducation agencies seems to be an unnecessary duplication of effort. Therefore, more attention should be given to the development of comprehensive state-level agreements that include formal mechanisms for consistent state-wide implementation so that the negotiation of local agreements will not be necessary.
- . To provide the SDE with enforcement authority, the state should consider the withholding of funds if agencies are found to be in noncompliance with the state (or local) interagency agreements.

#### Planning for Master Plan Sunset Review

With the passage of SB 1870, the date for termination of Master Plan has been extended to June 1985. The current independent evaluation by SRI will be completed by January 1982, so a 3-year period will elapse during which no formal comprehensive evaluation will be performed except for studies carried out within the SDE. We believe that numerous issues must be considered in anticipation of the sunset review of this program. The types of issues that need clarification are the following:

- . Specific goals of the sunset review and how outcomes are to be used (i.e., local program improvement, compliance monitoring, state policy purposes, or all these issues).
- . The specific policy questions that must be addressed and whether they are realistic in terms of what is technically possible.

- . Level of the evaluation--State, district, school, class.
- . Focus of evaluation--Grade (primary, secondary), handicapping condition, program areas.
- . Frequency of the evaluation effort--Yearly or only during the year before sunset review.
- . Responsibility for the evaluation--Identification of who will carry out the evaluation--LEAs, the SDE, another state agency or agencies, an independent contractor, or a combination. If a combination is used, determination of how all the information will be integrated and synthesized and who will be responsible for that task.
- . Funding--Whether specific funds should be targeted directly toward the evaluation and, if so, the appropriate funding level.
- . Monitoring evaluation activities--Determination of how the evaluation activity or activities will be monitored and by whom (i.e., through the SDE, another state agency, legislature, or a combination).

These topics are not intended to be exhaustive but represent the types of issues that must be resolved. Only after such questions have been clarified can one begin to define and organize the information requirements and data collection strategies necessary to carry out the sunset review. Here, too, a number of problems arise that will need definition. Typical issues are as follows:

- . Depth of information to be collected--Determination of how much and what types of information will be collected and from which populations. This evolves directly from the task of defining the goals and policy questions to be addressed.
- . Frequency of data collection.
- . Responsibility for defining data acquisition procedures to be used.
- . Level of data aggregation--Grade, student, handicapping condition, program areas (district, county, LEA, state).
- . Participation--Determination of whether participation by LEAs should be mandatory or voluntary. If mandatory, identification of who will enforce participation. This issue is important in light of past practice, which allows districts to decline to participate in evaluation activities.
- . Appropriate instrumentation that will reflect data needs and an evaluation design consistently implemented.



## INTRODUCTION

This is the third in a series of four annual reports to be submitted to the California State Legislature and the Governor as part of the independent evaluation of the California Master Plan for Special Education, as mandated in Assembly Bill 1250 and Senate Bill 1870. The First Annual Report, submitted in April 1979, presented an analysis of the legislative requirements and assumptions implicit in both the federal law (PL 94-142, known as the "Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975") and the California State Master Plan for Special Education. That report also described the conceptual model and research design used in the study; outlined expectations regarding implementation effects and outcomes for students, parents, and teachers; discussed the method used for selecting counties, districts, or responsible local agencies (RLAs) to be evaluated; and presented an overview of the data collection activities scheduled during the study period.

The two-volume Second Annual Report, submitted in April 1980, presented the data collected during the 1978-79 school year. The first volume was a nontechnical presentation of the research findings, and the second volume was a technical appendix that detailed the methodological aspects of the work. Most of the information presented was based on findings from questionnaires sent to more than 6,000 special education and regular classroom teachers and to more than 3,000 parents of students who were receiving special education services during the 1978-79 school year. The Executive Summary from the Second Annual Report, which outlines the major findings, is included here in Appendix A.

This Third Annual Report contains the findings from follow-up studies in six Master Plan (MP) and four non-Master Plan (NMP) areas. The findings reported in the following sections are based on responses of administrators, support personnel, and special education and regular classroom teachers to questionnaires and to questions asked during interviews conducted by SRI staff members during 1-week visits to each of the 10 sites. Table 1 shows the categories and numbers of respondents with whom the project staff spoke. Topics that were explored in greater depth during 1979-80 were the following:

- . Comparison of enrollment and placement patterns for 1978-79 and 1979-80.
- . Local evaluation efforts, record keeping, and data management.
- . The role of the resource specialist.
- . Inservice training for the regular classroom teacher.

Table 1

RESPONDENTS TO INTERVIEWS AND QUESTIONNAIRES

	Type of Area		Total
	MP	NMP	
RLA Director or Assistant Director	7	--	7
Program Specialist	34	--	34
Program Coordinator	6	10	16
Principal	4	2	6
Supervisor	7	1	8
MIS/Evaluation Specialist	7	--	7
Special Education Director or Director of Pupil Personnel	5	5	10
Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent	2	4	6
Budget Analyst/Budget Officer	2	--	2
Staff Development Specialist	1	--	1
Psychologist	2	12	14
Child Advocate	1	--	1
Resource Specialist	92	--	92
LDG Teachers (learning disability group)	--	66	66
Regular Classroom Teachers with Special Education Students	<u>93</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>132</u>
Total	263	139	402

- . Parent involvement and participation.
- . Interagency agreements and the use of other types of outside resources.

These topics are addressed in separate sections of this report, which outline our findings and recommendations.





## COMPARISON OF ENROLLMENT AND PLACEMENT PATTERNS IN 1978-79 AND 1979-80

### Overview

As described in our Second Annual Report, an examination of enrollment figures for the areas in our sample revealed substantial differences between MP and NMP areas in the rates of identification of special education students. These differences seemed to be due to differences in the identification of a single group of students, the learning handicapped (LH). During our site visits in 1979, school personnel had reported that criteria were too vague and that no formal written eligibility standards existed for the identification of LH students. A director of special education expressed concern about this situation: "Without good criteria, special education could expand until there is not enough money to fund it adequately." Similar concern was expressed by a resource specialist (RS) in one MP area who said:

It would be easy to fill our programs with children who have very little evidence of learning disabilities as most of us understand the term. I think we need guidelines from the state to help us select students for special help who are most in need and most likely to benefit from what is admittedly an expensive program.

Given that an important basis for sound policy planning is the ability of decisionmakers and program administrators to identify a program's target population, the present confusion and ambiguity regarding eligibility and identification of the LH population is an issue of great policy consequence at both state and local levels. This is particularly true because LH students constitute the major portion of the special education population, representing approximately 62% and 47%, respectively, of the total special education populations in our sample of MP and NMP areas.

To gain a better understanding of the dynamics of identifying the target population, particularly students classified as LH, we discussed the issue with administrators, special education teachers, and special education support staff in each of the 10 sites visited during 1980 and with representatives of other state departments of education. The project staff interviewers asked about the criteria being used locally to determine whether a student is classified as LH and whether the criteria are helpful in making decisions about eligibility and placement, and they solicited opinions about the potential for future growth in the LH population.

In this section, we compare enrollment figures for the areas in the sample for the school years 1978-79 and 1979-80, report the findings from interviews in the field, and, on the basis of those findings, draw conclusions, suggest the policy implications of our findings, and offer policy options for consideration by state decisionmakers.

## Special Education Enrollments

### Total Enrollment

In evaluating enrollment information, we were unable to include all 25 areas originally selected for the study. One MP area that had been included in the study in 1979 had to be excluded because we could not collect information on students for the 1979-80 school year in the form consistent with that for other MP areas. In addition, one area in our sample that had not been in Master Plan during 1978-79 implemented the program during the 1979-80 school year. Consequently, it is included as part of the MP group for this year's report. With the exclusion of one MP area and the transfer of one NMP area into the MP sample, the sample now comprises 24 areas, of which 17 are implementing Master Plan and 7 are not yet implementing the program.

For comparative purposes, we have grouped the areas according to number of years they have been implementing Master Plan as follows:

- . MP1--Master Plan implemented either in 1975-76 or 1976-77
- . MP2--Master Plan implemented either in 1978-79 or 1979-80\*
- . NMP--Master Plan not yet implemented.

During the 1979-80 school year, the total number of students between the ages of 6 and 17 enrolled in special education programs in California was 321,448, or approximately 6.8% of the total school-age population. The MP areas in our sample were serving approximately 69,910 special education students, or about 22% of the total special education population in California.

Table 2 compares the enrollment of special education students in the 24 areas for the years 1978-79 and 1979-80. This table shows the number of students served in both years and indicates the relative growth or decline in both special education and regular education enrollments. In the MP1 group, 22% of the areas showed an increase in the proportion of students served, while the remaining 78% showed a general decline in both the proportion of students identified and the total number of students served. This decline in special education enrollments varied by 4 to 12%. The notable exception to this general pattern of decline was area 5 where considerable growth occurred. Area 5 showed a 4.18% increase in the proportion of students served, representing an increase in the special education population of 35% over 1978-79. This growth was almost entirely due to the greater number of students identified as LH, which increased from a rate of 7.34% in 1978-79 to 10.67% in 1979-80.

---

\* No new areas implemented Master Plan during the 1977-78 school year.

Table 2

ENROLLMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS  
IN THE STUDY AREAS IN 1978-79 AND 1979-80

Area	Proportion of Students Served		Change in Percentage Served From 1978-79 to 1979-80	Number of Students Served		Special Education Growth or Decline From 1978-79 to 1979-80	Regular Education Growth or Decline From 1978-79 to 1979-80
	1978-79	1979-80		1978-79	1979-80		
MP							
1	11.36	10.98	-0.38	6,457	6,184	-4.0	-1.0
2	8.16	8.23	+0.07	4,298	4,314	+0.4	-1.0
3	9.61	9.99	+0.38	4,879	4,835	-0.9	-5.0
4	11.27	10.91	-0.36	4,565	4,297	-6.0	-3.0
5	12.64	16.82	+4.18	2,938	3,970	+35.0	-3.0
6	10.39	10.00	-0.39	1,348	1,219	-10.0	-6.0
7	9.27	8.81	-0.46	4,956	4,738	-4.0	+1.0
8	8.97	8.82	-0.15	4,264	4,112	-4.0	-2.0
9	10.20	9.11	-1.09	4,810	4,226	-12.0	-2.0
MP2							
10	6.71	8.26	+1.55	7,747	9,240	+19.0	-3.0
11	10.76	9.22	-1.54	10,230	8,987	-12.0	+3.0
12	6.39	7.77	+1.38	3,185	3,701	+16.0	-4.0
13	11.28	10.37	-0.91	2,577	2,248	-13.0	-5.0
14	9.85	11.15	+1.30	2,056	2,227	+8.0	-1.0
15	7.78	8.49	+0.71	2,839	3,239	+14.0	+1.0
16	10.99	10.56	-0.43	511	492	-4.0	+ .2
17	9.10	10.26	+1.16	5,482	5,854	+7.0	-5.0
NMP							
18	7.26	7.22	-0.04	8,475	8,488	+0.2	+1.0
19	6.79	6.16	-0.63	5,541	5,033	-9.0	+0.1
20	9.24	9.16	-0.08	2,697	2,616	-3.0	-2.0
21	6.72	7.06	+0.34	1,862	1,882	+1.0	-4.0
22	9.59	10.43	+0.84	2,386	2,456	+3.0	-5.0
23	7.81	6.94	-0.87	1,737	1,569	-10.0	+2.0
24	6.05	11.16	+5.11	334	653	+96.0	+6.0

For the MP2 group, this pattern was reversed: 63% of the areas showed substantial growth in the proportion of students served as well as in the number of students served. Special education enrollments in this group increased from 7 to 19% over the 2 years. Again, as Table 2 indicates, this growth is closely tied to the overall increase in the proportion of students identified as LH.

Finally, in the NMP group, more than half of the areas (57%) showed slight declines in the proportion of special education students identified, with decreases in special education enrollments during 1979-80 of 3 to 10%. Remarkable growth occurred in area 24 where the proportion of students identified nearly doubled (from 6.05% in 1978-79 to 11.16% in 1979-80), representing an overall increase in the student population of 96% in 1979-80. A fairly large increase also occurred in the regular education population in this area compared with that in the other areas in the sample (regular enrollments decreased in 16 of the 24 areas). The most interesting trend for the NMP group is that even though the overall proportion of special education students declined in four of the seven areas, the proportion of students identified as LH increased in all seven areas.

Table 3 compares the percentage of 6- to 17-year-old students identified for special education programs in the areas in our sample with state and national averages for 1978-79 and 1979-80.

Table 3  
PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SCHOOL POPULATION IDENTIFIED FOR  
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Year	Averages of Sample Groups			California Average	National Average
	MP1	MP2	NMP		
1978-79	9.83	8.49	7.75	6.41	7.51
1979-80	9.55	9.09	7.39	6.87	7.81

The overall California average was somewhat below the national average, but areas implementing Master Plan had percentages of special education students well above the national average. In NMP areas, the percentages were above the state average in both years; they were slightly above the national average in 1978-79 and slightly below it in 1979-80. This change in the average for NMP areas occurred because during 1978-79 one of the areas was preparing to implement Master Plan the next year and a high proportion of its students were identified for special education, thus affecting the overall NMP average.

## Enrollment by Handicapping Condition

Table 4 breaks down the overall percentages of students identified in the MP and NMP groups according to the four broad handicapping categories: learning handicapped (LH), communicatively handicapped (CH), physically handicapped (PH), and severely handicapped (SH). The table clearly shows that changes in overall percentages can be traced to changes in the proportion of students identified as LH. Almost direct correlations can be made between the growth and decline of the LH population and the increase or decrease of total students identified in each area. Also indicated are the substantial differences in the percentages of LH students identified in MP areas compared with NMP areas. Nearly 2.5% more of the total school population was identified as LH in MP areas than in NMP areas.

Figure 1 summarizes these patterns of identification across the four categories of students as a proportion of total school enrollments. One set of bars represents the total percentage of students identified for special education aggregated across each group in our sample, and the remaining four sets of bars represent each broad category of handicapping condition. The overall percentage of special education students identified in the NMP group declined slightly. A significant shift occurred, however, within categories of students. The proportion of students identified as LH substantially increased, and the proportion of students identified as CH correspondingly decreased. The greatest variation in the student population was within the LH and CH groups.

A relationship clearly exists between handicapping categories and program placements, as shown in Table 5. The majority of students identified as LH were served in the RSP/LDG\* program, and the others were served in special classes. The majority of CH students were served through Designated Instruction Services (DIS). Program placement practices for the CH population differed little across MP and NMP areas, but a significant difference in placement patterns existed for the LH population. Compared with MP areas, NMP areas served far more LH students in special classes and fewer in either LDG or DIS programs. We could not explore the extent to which these differences in identification and placement were tied to variations in the interpretation of eligibility standards or were the result of placement incentives created by funding formulas. Our discussions with administrators and teachers in the field, as well as with representatives of other state departments of education, however, led us to believe strongly that the differences were due to a combination of both these factors.

## Difficulties in Analyzing Enrollment Data

Throughout this evaluation, we have encountered problems in analyzing enrollment data. These problems stem from inconsistent data collection

---

\* Resource Specialist Program/Learning Disabilities Group.

Table 4

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS IN REGULAR SCHOOLS IDENTIFIED  
FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS  
1978-79 and 1979-80

Area	Learning Handicapped		Communicatively Handicapped		Physically Handicapped		Severely Handicapped		Total	
	1978-79	1979-80	1978-79	1979-80	1978-79	1979-80	1978-79	1979-80	1978-79	1979-80
MP1										
1	7.64	7.58	2.90	2.66	0.55	0.38	0.28	0.37	11.36	10.98
2	4.87	4.88	2.48	2.51	0.50	0.51	0.31	0.33	8.16	8.23
3	5.48	5.97	2.95	2.84	0.80	0.76	0.37	0.41	9.61	9.99
4	6.55	6.53	3.62	3.20	0.85	0.88	0.25	0.30	11.27	10.91
5	7.34	10.67	4.01	4.93	0.92	0.86	0.37	0.36	12.64	16.82
6	6.64	5.75	2.93	3.28	0.33	0.26	0.49	0.71	10.39	10.00
7	6.19	5.99	2.20	1.98	0.36	0.38	0.52	0.46	9.27	8.81
8	5.30	5.21	1.99	2.06	1.22	1.05	0.47	0.51	8.97	8.82
9	<u>5.48</u>	<u>5.20</u>	<u>3.23</u>	<u>2.71</u>	<u>1.04</u>	<u>0.76</u>	<u>0.45</u>	<u>0.45</u>	<u>10.20</u>	<u>9.11</u>
Total	5.97*	5.92	2.75	2.57	0.73	0.64	0.38	0.42	9.83	9.53
MP2										
10	3.53	4.79	1.29	1.42	1.27	1.40	0.61	0.66	6.71	8.26
11	8.28	6.32	1.60	1.61	0.32	0.80	0.55	0.50	10.76	9.22
12	4.13	5.06	1.89	2.27	0.27	0.41	0.10	0.03	6.39	7.77
13	7.14	6.96	3.30	2.72	0.43	0.37	0.40	0.32	11.28	10.37
14	5.38	6.44	3.70	3.68	0.33	0.56	0.44	0.46	9.85	11.15
15	4.28	4.65	2.60	2.75	0.37	0.52	0.53	0.56	7.78	8.49
16	6.65	7.38	4.04	2.73	0.13	0.19	0.17	0.26	10.99	10.56
17	<u>3.30</u>	<u>5.20</u>	<u>4.32</u>	<u>3.81</u>	<u>1.18</u>	<u>0.87</u>	<u>0.30</u>	<u>0.37</u>	<u>9.10</u>	<u>10.26</u>
Total	5.43	5.52	1.94	2.25	0.64	0.86	0.48	0.46	8.49	9.09
NMP										
18	2.95	3.25	3.28	2.96	0.75	0.72	0.27	0.29	7.26	7.22
19	2.60	2.83	3.15	2.22	0.76	0.80	0.28	0.32	6.79	6.16
20	3.43	3.65	2.48	2.02	2.39	2.57	0.94	0.92	9.24	9.16
21	3.18	3.62	2.46	2.38	0.89	0.86	0.20	0.18	6.72	7.06
22	5.08	5.24	2.89	3.12	0.84	1.13	0.78	0.93	9.59	10.43
23	3.31	3.74	3.61	2.36	0.34	0.28	0.54	0.56	7.81	6.94
24	<u>3.51</u>	<u>5.84</u>	<u>2.21</u>	<u>5.08</u>	<u>0.04</u>	<u>0.05</u>	<u>0.29</u>	<u>0.19</u>	<u>6.05</u>	<u>11.16</u>
Total	3.16	3.44	3.27	2.63	0.94	0.91	0.38	0.42	7.75	7.40

\*These are not weighted averages but are based on the total school population and total special education enrollments aggregated across all areas in the group.

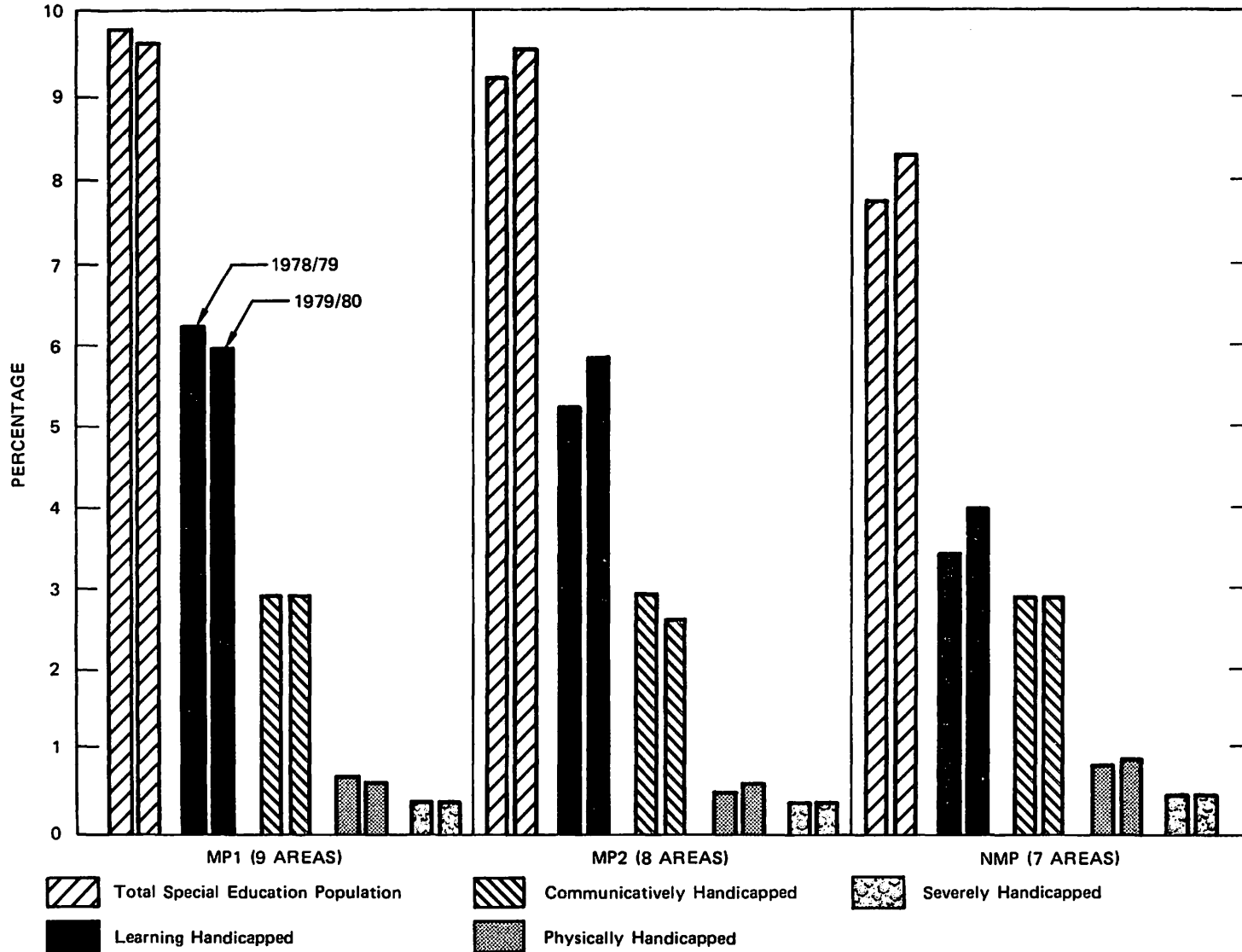


FIGURE 1 SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLLMENTS IN 1978-79 AND 1979-80 BY HANDICAP CATEGORY



Table 5

PERCENTAGES OF COMMUNICATIVELY HANDICAPPED  
AND LEARNING HANDICAPPED STUDENTS  
BY PROGRAM PLACEMENT  
1979-1980

<u>Category</u>	<u>Designated Instruction Services</u>			<u>Resource Specialist Program/Learning Disabilities Group</u>			<u>Special Class</u>			<u>Other</u>		
	<u>MP1</u>	<u>MP2</u>	<u>NMP</u>	<u>MP1</u>	<u>MP2</u>	<u>NMP</u>	<u>MP1</u>	<u>MP2</u>	<u>NMP</u>	<u>MP1</u>	<u>MP2</u>	<u>NMP</u>
Learning handicapped	9	4	2	66	65	57	24	29	41	1	2	0.0*
Communicatively handicapped	85	85	86	4	0.60	1	11	14	13	.0	0.40	0.0

---

\*Less than 0.10%.

procedures, aggregation of data on elementary and secondary special education students, and inaccurate record keeping at the local level.

A problem that seriously affects policy planning is the lack of consistent data collection procedures carried out over a number of years. This problem is illustrated by the change in reporting of special education enrollment for the 1979-80 school year that required separate forms for MP and NMP areas. In NMP areas, information was collected as it had been from all areas in the previous year--by each individual classification of student. For the MP areas, however, the reporting forms were changed so that only aggregated information for the four large groups of students (LH, CH, PH, and SH) was reported. Because of this difference in reporting, we could not make comparisons between the MP and NMP groups on the basis of specific types of handicapping conditions.

Another significant weakness in the data collection is that information is not collected separately for elementary and secondary special education students, as it is for the regular school population. This aggregation of data on elementary and secondary students may mask patterns and trends that are important for long-range policy planning. After 2 years of field visits and discussions with special education personnel, our impression is that most of the growth in the special education population is occurring at the elementary level. Although this is not reflected in the composite percentages of the total school population identified for special education in 1978-79 and 1979-80 (6.41% and 6.87%, respectively), the population identified at the elementary level could be 16% or more while that at the secondary school level is most likely relatively low. We cannot be certain of this, however, because data are not available in this form. Yet if the greatest growth is in the elementary special education population, it can have a significant impact at the secondary level, although the implications of this will not become clear until 3 to 6 years from now as those students actually enter secondary schools.

Our 1979 survey indicated that parents of secondary school students were not nearly as informed or knowledgeable about their rights or about programs as parents of elementary students. Because parents of current elementary students are informed about their rights and about programs available for their children, they most likely will expect these services to continue for their children in secondary school. Certainly, many students currently being served in elementary school programs will no longer require special education services by the time they reach secondary school, but a large proportion will require a continuation of programs and services. Given fiscal constraints and competing demands for state funds, if the proportion of students requiring services at the secondary level were to reach that of the elementary level, the state and local districts would probably have difficulty in continuing to fund such programs at current levels. Without data that distinguish the elementary from the secondary populations, it is not possible to explore the ramifications of current practice or the potential for growth at the secondary levels 3 or 6 years from now.

The third problem in analyzing enrollment data concerns local record keeping. In our field visits, we found problems in local record keeping and data management that made much of the information reported to the state suspect.

(These problems are discussed in greater detail in the next section of this report, "Local Evaluation Activities, Record Keeping, and Data Management.") Because at both the federal and state levels funding is based on student enrollments, accurate reporting is essential because small errors of over- or under-reporting can have significant fiscal consequences. The following example illustrates the potential financial impact based on relatively small differences in enrollments.

Table 6 shows the number and percentage of students served in the RSP in MP areas during the 1978-79 and 1979-80 school years. Using these numbers as base figures, we have projected potential RSP enrollments and costs for this program when full implementation subsequently is achieved. In making these projections, we have assumed that after implementation of SB 1870, most districts will tend to follow practices in program placement similar to those we have observed in the pilot areas that have implemented Master Plan over the past 4 to 5 years. Therefore, we have projected two possible California averages, one based on MP 1978-79 figures and one based on 1979-80 figures. Using these two base enrollment figures, we have illustrated the significant cost implications that these small enrollment differences can have.

Table 7 presents these projected estimates and illustrates that, based on the assumptions outlined above, a difference of somewhat less than 0.5% (0.41%) in the number of students enrolled in the RSP creates a cost differential of approximately \$14 million. Therefore, differences of approximately 1% in RSP enrollment have a dollar significance of approximately \$28 million. This is important from both the state's and the local education agencies' (LEA) standpoints. Overreporting benefits the districts at the expense of the state, and underreporting benefits the state at the expense of the districts. The accuracy and validity of the enrollment figures are important not only from a purely economic standpoint, but also for long-range policy planning purposes.

### Findings from Interviews

The patterns and variations in the LH population indicated by enrollment figures were confirmed by administrators and teachers during our site visits. Administrators and teachers in both MP and NMP areas shared the belief that the LH population would continue to grow. Those in NMP areas believed that this growth would be significant because they would be able to identify many more students as LH under current Master Plan guidelines than they could under previous categorical classifications.

Although the opinion about potential growth was the same for administrators and teachers, their concerns about it were different. Many teachers expressed satisfaction with the ambiguity in LH identification criteria because it allowed them to place in special education students whom they believed were in need of special help. However, we found that such flexibility also created difficulties. Within a single MP school site, we found that two RSs were using totally different criteria and assessment processes, one based on a psychological approach and the other based on a more academic approach.

Table 6

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS SERVED IN  
RESOURCE SPECIALIST PROGRAM IN MP AREAS  
DURING THE 1978-79 AND 1979-80 SCHOOL YEARS

Category	1978 - 79		1979 - 80	
	Number of Students Served in the Resource Specialist Program	RSP Enrollment as a Percentage of Regular Education Enrollment	Number of Students Served in the Resource Specialist Program	RSP Enrollment as a Percentage of Regular Education Enrollment
Communicatively handicapped	511	0.07	412	0.05
Physically handicapped	156	0.02	126	0.02
Learning handicapped	23,400	3.32	28,202	3.75
Severely handicapped	<u>54</u>	<u>.00*</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>.00*</u>
Total	24,121	3.42%	28,760	3.83%

\* Less than 0.01%.

Table 7

PROJECTED TOTAL STATE ENROLLMENT IN RESOURCE SPECIALIST PROGRAM BASED  
ON ACTUAL MP 1978-79 AND 1979-80 ENROLLMENTS

	<u>Total State Average Equals Either:</u>		<u>Difference (0.41%)</u>
	<u>3.42%</u>	<u>3.83%</u>	
Projected state RSP enrollment*	136,800	153,200	16,400
Number of resource specialists required <sup>†</sup>	4,886	5,471	585
Estimated funds required <sup>‡</sup>	\$117,264,000	\$131,204,000	\$14,040,000

---

\* These figures are based on an estimated total California school population of 4 million students.

† Although the RSP case load is 24 students, up to 28 students per resource specialist are allowed, and these figures are based on this upper limit.

‡ These estimates are based on an average cost per RSP of \$24,000.

approach. Because of the basic philosophical differences of these two teachers regarding what constitutes a learning disability, each teacher identified very different student populations and each conducted very different programs within the same school. This within-school difference may have been an extreme case, but we found that such variation was common across districts and areas in the sample.

In a large MP area, the RSs interviewed indicated that they felt they were being pressured to accept students into their programs. That is, the RSs were receiving many students with mild learning problems that they believed could be better served through Title I or reading programs.

Administrators, on the other hand, were concerned about the likely growth of the LH population because of its unpredictable nature. Population growth is obviously tied to the need for fiscal resources to fund programs, and the increasing uncertainty about funding naturally causes anxiety among administrators.

In inquiring about what criteria were being used for identification of LH students, we discovered that most districts and RLAs had not developed their own standards but were relying on the state to develop standard criteria. However, a state consultant informed us that the state has now abandoned its attempts to provide clearer guidelines for identification of the LH population and has instead decided to develop more specific procedural guidelines for assessment and placement that it believes will resolve the ambiguity. We are not optimistic that procedural guidelines alone will resolve the problem teachers and administrators face in making decisions about eligibility. When each district is allowed to develop its own definition and interpretation of what constitutes a learning handicap (as is currently the case), differential identification from one district to another results, so that a student identified as LH in one district may be ineligible for services in another. This raises serious questions about the state's responsibility to provide an appropriate education. For example, the district that had identified the student as LH and had provided special education services may not have been correct in its identification. If it was not, the student received inappropriate services. Similarly, the other district may have erred in not recognizing the student's needs.

Because the Office of Civil Rights most frequently brings legal suits under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 at the district level, districts are seeking more leadership and direction from the California State Department of Education (SDE). The lack of well-defined eligibility standards at the state level creates uncertainty about who should and should not be identified; about the potential for growth of the target population; about the ability of the state to adequately monitor assessment, identification, and placement practices; and about the state's ability to fund programs adequately to accommodate identified students.

The SRI project staff found that in the absence of criteria from the state, most areas use measures of need based on chronological age, grade level, and expected performance. This approach is one that was rejected by the federal government in its development of federal regulations because it

tends to exclude many young children and includes students who, on the basis of other discrepancy measures, would not be found to have a specific learning disability.

"Learning handicapped" is not a term used in federal law or regulations, and the use of this term in California under pre-SB 1870 Master Plan legislation has created much confusion regarding who is and is not eligible under this category. Essentially, three types of students are included under the LH umbrella in California: those who are learning disabled, educationally retarded, or behavior disordered. However, the term used in federal law is "specific learning disability," and this narrower definition is now used in SB 1870. For the 1980-81 school year, California will continue to collect information under the broad category of LH but will amend data collection forms for 1981-82 so that they are compatible with federal reporting requirements.

Under federal regulations, a student whose learning problem is due primarily to a visual, hearing, or motor handicap, to mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or to an environmental deprivation cannot be identified as having a specific learning disability. Thus, the use of the term learning handicapped in California has enabled districts to provide special education resources for many students who are not performing at expected levels but who, according to the narrower federal definition, are probably not specific learning disabled.

We believe that the use of federal definitions of eligibility under SB 1870 will be helpful in the resolution of this issue. It should not be viewed as a return to labeling of students; rather, specification of handicapping conditions in the law serves simply to define the target population. The emphasis in California on providing a variety of program options based on the assessment of individual need eliminates the classical necessity for labeling either classes or students.

#### Legislative Limits on Placement for Funding Purposes

The California legislature, in an attempt to provide guidance as well as control, included limits on placement in SB 1870. Article 7, Section 56760 (a,2), of SB 1870 states:

The ratio of pupils served by instructional personnel service to total enrollment in kindergarten and grades 1 to 12 inclusive, receiving a specific instructional service shall not exceed the following maximum proportions:

- (A) For special classes and centers, 0.028
- (B) For resource specialist programs, 0.040
- (C) For designated instruction, 0.042.

When these ratios are converted to percentages, they are 2.8% for special class placements, 4.0% for the RSP, and 4.2% for DIS. These

proportions seem to presuppose some understanding of what constitutes an appropriate placement of students, yet aside from past practice we find little on which to evaluate the basis for these ratios. For example, Table 8 shows the percentage of students served in MP and NMP areas during the 1979-80 school year across these three placements. Comparing these rates with the current legislative limits reveals that RSP placements in 11 of the 17 MP areas (65%) were above the 4% limit, which means that each area would require waivers to exceed the legislated proportions.

In 7 of the 17 MP areas in the sample, the LH population exceeds 6%; and in one case, the proportion of LH students has reached 10.67%. This extraordinary growth in the number of students identified as having learning problems should be of concern and suggests a precursor of potential growth unless measures are taken to clarify eligibility standards for local districts to use. California could establish criteria and assessment procedures that would assure the proper identification of the specific learning disabled population and provide a structure against which state monitoring could be conducted and still meet federal mandates. Before any criterion is actually implemented, it should first be evaluated in terms of its impact on current practice and the change it would have on the kinds and characteristics of students that would be identified.

### Summary of Findings

The findings from our site visits and interviews during 1979-80 regarding enrollment and placement patterns are summarized as follows:

- . On the average, areas that have been implementing Master Plan over 4 to 5 years showed a stabilization in their special education populations during the 1979-80 school year. One exception to this was an area where the percentage of identified students increased by 4.18% to a total of 12.64%. This growth was due almost entirely to an increase in the percentage of students identified as LH.
- . MP areas that have been in the program for only 1 or 2 years showed substantial growth in the percentage of special education students. This growth, as was the case in MP1 areas, was tied to the increase in the number of LH students identified.
- . In NMP areas, an overall decrease occurred in the percentage of students identified. While in 57% of these areas the population declined slightly, in every case the number of students identified as LH increased.
- . Relatively small differences in the percentage of students identified and served in the RSP have significant fiscal impacts. Every 1% increase in the proportion of students served in the RSP results in a dollar increase of approximately \$28 million. This emphasizes the need for accurate reporting of student enrollments.



Table 8

COMPARISON OF STUDENT PLACEMENTS WITH LEGISLATIVE LIMITS  
 FOR DESIGNATED INSTRUCTION SERVICES, RESOURCE SPECIALIST PROGRAM  
 AND SPECIAL CLASSES DURING THE 1979-80 SCHOOL YEAR

<u>Area</u>	<u>Designated Instruction Services (4.2%)</u>	<u>Resource Specialist Program/Learning Disabilities Group (4.0%)</u>	<u>Special Class (2.8%)</u>
MP1			
1	5.08	4.20	1.61
2	2.26	3.46	2.43
3	3.28	4.39	2.20
4	3.43	4.35	3.01
5	5.30	8.51	2.65
6	3.13	4.03	2.68
7	2.25	4.39	2.11
8	2.77	3.70	2.19
9	2.99	3.85	2.13
MP2			
10	2.27	3.18	2.70
11	2.36	3.45	3.33
12	1.80	3.19	2.51
13	4.15	4.30	1.73
14	3.68	4.52	2.78
15	2.70	4.07	1.55
16	2.49	6.03	2.00
17	4.36	4.11	1.51
NMP			
18	3.11	2.03	2.01
19	2.49	1.44	2.14
20	3.92	2.21	2.86
21	2.76	1.81	2.29
22	3.55	3.25	3.48
23	2.19	1.80	2.94
24	4.39	3.43	3.28

- . On the average, in MP areas approximately 2.5% more of the total school population was identified as LH than in NMP areas, suggesting possible differences in identification and assessment practices as well as in possible incentives and in the funding formula that may encourage particular types of identification practices or program placements.
- . The teachers, administrators, and support staff interviewed agreed that the LH population will continue to grow, given the present ambiguities about eligibility.
- . Flexibility and subjectivity built into current LH identification and assessment practices across districts result in students' being identified as LH in one district but being regarded as ineligible in another.
- . Of the areas already implementing Master Plan, 65% exceed the RSP placement limit of 4% specified in SB 1870.
- . The lack of consistent state data collection practices carried out over a number of years seriously impedes state policy and program planning efforts.
- . Because enrollment and program information is not collected separately for the elementary and secondary populations, neither differences in identification and placement practices between these two levels nor future secondary-level program and fiscal impacts can be evaluated.

### Recommendations

The following four major recommendations have evolved from our exploration of enrollment patterns and practices in the identification of the LH population:

- . For purposes of long-range policy and program planning, the state should collect, analyze, and evaluate enrollment data separately for elementary and secondary students.
- . State reporting forms should remain consistent over at least a 5-year period so that comparative studies can be made against a consistent data base.
- . The state should develop criteria for the identification of students with specific learning disabilities so as to ensure uniform identification practices across districts. Development of such criteria will provide the structure for defining the target population that is necessary for monitoring, enforcement, evaluation, and planning purposes.

- The state should explore possible fiscal incentives and disincentives implicit in the Master Plan funding formula that may influence identification and placement practices.

## RECORD KEEPING, DATA MANAGEMENT, AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

### Overview

As the emphasis on providing equal opportunities for the disabled has evolved over the past decade, the size and complexity of special education programs in the state have grown, and special education administration has become a far more complicated task than it was in the past. Schools have joined together into larger governance units, the number of students identified as needing special education services has increased, and laws have been passed requiring the protection of parent's and student's civil rights through due process procedures. These factors have all combined to raise the visibility and interest in special education administration. Even with an overall decline in school enrollment throughout most of the state, the growth in special education programs most likely will continue as Master Plan is implemented across the state over the next few years. Recognition of these factors highlights the necessity for efficient data management techniques and the need for ongoing monitoring and evaluation at state and local levels.

Therefore, as part of our third-year activities, we studied the development and use of management information systems (MISs) in special education programs at various sites throughout the state, as well as the role of evaluation.

### Local Record Keeping and Management Information Systems

To guide our evaluation of local record keeping and MIS, we defined an MIS as a system for handling information to assist in the management decision process. Handling information refers to the collection, storage, retrieval, manipulation, and production of new data and data-based products.

Of the numerous dimensions against which we might have measured local MISs, we selected the following five:

- . Relevance
- . Punctuality
- . Flexibility
- . Utility
- . Reliability.

## Relevance

To assess relevance, we asked whether the system allows for the collection, storage, and retrieval of information useful to the decision process. In all cases, we found that the current operational system accommodated most information. Sometimes an overabundance of information was collected and stored. However, a common problem we encountered was that the information was usually not available at a single location. Therefore, even though much information existed, it was scattered across various locations--the district office, county office, or school site. In addition, tracking individual pieces of information was difficult; relating individual student data to school-level data and to student counts was difficult. Although an audit trail could be followed (with difficulty) in all but one site, forms and procedures varied to such an extent that considerable time was required for orientation to site-specific MIS processes and procedures. This lack of standardization is a common theme throughout this Third Annual Report and is the basis for many of our recommendations.

## Punctuality

Regarding system punctuality, we asked whether it was possible to provide information on time for the decision process. We found that more than half of the systems had difficulties in producing information on time for either local decisionmaking or state deadlines. Although state deadlines were usually met, it was a significant accomplishment.

## Flexibility

To examine system flexibility, we asked whether the system could expand or change to meet new information demands and whether it could address future-oriented questions. We found that the four sites with automated data processing capabilities naturally had the most flexibility. Although most of these systems could not answer typical "what if" questions, they had the potential to do so. Also, these systems could expand easily to incorporate new information. Other systems based on more traditional methods, such as Roledex cards, files, and attendance sheets, were by their nature relatively inflexible and had little potential for addressing future-oriented, "what if" questions. At two sites where computers were not currently being used, computer-based systems were being considered. One site had abandoned a computer-based information system because of concern about maintaining the privacy of the information. This concern could have been alleviated by one of the many methods that exist for assuring the confidentiality of records while taking advantage of a computer-based MIS.

## Utility

To assess system utility, we asked to what extent the system was used and integrated into local policy planning. We found that in about half the sites, information was merely gathered, stored, and used for required

reporting purposes. Information was used only minimally and rarely for administrative decisionmaking purposes.

### Reliability

In evaluating system reliability, we were interested in determining the accuracy of the information. At most sites, special education student count data were collected from individual teachers and then aggregated to produce district-level counts. Most frequently, teachers, resource specialists, program specialists, or program coordinators were responsible for providing information for data entry into the MIS by completing entrance and exit forms documenting a student's current status. Another method used was the aggregation of monthly attendance forms generated at the classroom level. At the initial levels of data collection, greater incentives exist for assuring that a student is entered into the system than for making sure that information regarding continuation in the program or exit from the program is recorded and entered. Hence, more rigorous effort is expended in recording the initial receipt of service, and the information about students entering the system usually is more comprehensive and reliable than student exit information.

In four sites, we examined administrative records to determine whether it was possible to trace the history of students who had been identified as having received services during the 1978-79 academic year. We did not trace the student's record back to a responsible teacher or supervisor but relied on the administrative record keeping systems at the site. Table 9 presents the results of our effort in these sites. The names had been provided to us by each area last year as part of our 1979 parent survey. The first column indicates the total number of names provided by each of the areas, and the second column represents the percentage of this total for which receipt of services could not be verified by examination of administrative records. As indicated, the results across these four sites vary greatly and a high degree of inadequate record keeping is apparent in two sites.

Several sites used parallel systems to count students. For example, they used a monthly computer count as well as a manual count based on monthly attendance forms or teachers' student lists. Results obtained from each method rarely agreed. At one site, over a period of several months, a 2,000 to 5,000 variation in the number of students counted existed between the two methods. Computer-generated counts tended to be lower than manual counts, and the sites typically used the higher counts for reporting purposes, with subsequent questions being raised locally about why the computer-generated counts were "too low." Whether students receiving services were not being entered into the information system, whether the system failed to note the end of the students' receipt of special services, or whether duplicate counting occurred in the manual procedure was unclear. In any case, the consistent use of two separate student record systems is both costly and inefficient.

Table 9

SITE VISIT RECORD REVIEW OF MIS RELIABILITY

<u>Total Number of Student Names Provided</u>	<u>Percentage of Undocumented Records</u>
212	21
123	11
106	4
108	2

Most MIS administrators were not very confident about the accuracy of the information generated by their systems. They claimed that sometimes they had to "juggle student-count data" or estimate numbers to provide the information required. Moreover, we found that information systems at most sites could not accurately follow the progress of an individual student from one placement to another. All sites indicated that their data on the movement of special education students between different instructional settings (referred to as "flow-of-student" information) were inaccurate.

Accurate information about the flow of students from one special education placement to another and their eventual exit from the program can serve several important purposes at both state and local levels, among them: monitoring of student movement through progressively less restrictive environments to provide a measure of the degree to which mainstreaming is occurring and providing a basis for future program planning. With accurate data on the flow of students, an LEA can establish probabilities of an individual's transition from one placement to another over time. This, combined with other information, such as data on the likelihood that a student will move out of the district, can provide valuable insights into the future distribution of student populations in various programs and allow for more cost-effective planning of future programs, budgets, and administrative strategies.

Inappropriate recording of information was not the only factor that accounted for reporting errors. Frequently, the misunderstanding of forms and unclear definition of required data elements caused confusion and hence inaccuracy. Respondents pointed out that clarification of definitions and directions plus an initial field-testing process would help them avoid problems. In addition, respondents said that they could provide more accurate information if given enough lead time to modify their systems to accommodate changes in forms and data requirements. They also believed that more feedback from the state, coupled with a better understanding of how the state intended to use the information, would enable them to improve the quality of the data they submitted.

## Local Evaluation Activities

Another purpose of our site visits during 1980 was to establish the extent to which evaluations of special education programs were being performed at the LEA level. Our site visit strategy was to gain an overall picture of current local evaluation practice. Therefore, we interviewed LEA special education administrative personnel who had been identified at the site as those who best could inform us about local evaluation practice.

Presented here are our findings in the following topic areas:

- . Priority of local evaluations.
- . Quality of local evaluations.
- . Involvement of Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and parents in local evaluation planning.
- . The use and effect of evaluation at the LEA level.
- . Dissemination of results.
- . Conditions that affect accomplishment of local evaluations.

### The Priority of Local Evaluations

We did not find that local evaluations were a high priority. In fact, few if any evaluation-related activities were occurring in 4 of the 10 sites. At five other sites, we found that a few evaluation activities were occurring and that results were being incorporated into local planning. However, in half the sites, no current report existed that documented activities in progress, procedures used, or results. A common finding across the sites was that evaluation had been planned but currently was stalled or, at best, was "in the works." Often, planned evaluation activities were not completed. Only one site had a thorough ongoing evaluation effort well integrated with other administrative functions.

### The Quality of Local Evaluations

In more than half of the sites, evaluation activities were limited in scope. Usually, only one data collection method was used, the most popular being survey questionnaires. Therefore, most of the information was self-reporting by teachers or parents. Very rarely were direct observation or direct measurement of events undertaken. Only one site reported using classroom observation as an evaluation tool.



In addition, information from only one segment of the special education teacher or parent population was gathered. For example, questions for special education teachers were directed only to learning skills teachers who dealt with a single portion of the special education student population. Moreover, sample sizes were usually surprisingly small. In one evaluation of parents of secondary students, the conclusions were based on a sample of 26 respondents who were from an area with an estimated population of 2,600 parents of special education students.

Selection bias in data collection procedures was also a common problem that limited the usefulness of results. For example, an evaluation of teacher interaction with parents was conducted using a sample of parents that had been selected by teachers.

At sites where formal evaluation activities were occurring, decisions regarding evaluation topics usually were made by the district special education director or RLA director. At one site, program specialists helped with evaluation planning. Curiously, at another site that had an annual evaluation, no one would claim responsibility for its planning or execution. Generally, at most of the sites, regular classroom teachers and special education teachers were not involved in any way in planning these formal evaluations. None of the respondents in MP areas indicated that RSs participated in the planning of a site's formal evaluation.

The extent of program evaluation at any one site was not far reaching. One program or an aspect of a program was usually investigated. Although this narrow focus of the evaluation was frequently appropriate, often no plans had been made for systematic expansion to related areas. Site studies over the past 3 years have focused primarily on compliance issues. During this time, five of the sites reviewed individualized education programs (IEPs) and compliance issues related to assessment and placement processes. Studies on assessment and placement criteria had been carried out in three sites, and the MIS personnel in those sites indicated that problems with the categorization of students and the lack of criteria for identifying LH students hampered their record keeping. In another site, a personnel utilization study was performed with a focus on program organization and coordination; extensive interviews with all personnel were conducted. In only one site was an annual evaluation implemented that extended over a variety of topics. At that site, topic areas included: the identification of students; provision of services; least restrictive environment; student performance; satisfaction of teachers, parents, and administrators; staff development; and program management.

Four respondents reported that local evaluations of inservice training had been conducted in their sites, and one local evaluator reported that inservice training evaluations were conducted annually. At another site, evaluation reports over the past 2 years provided information about staff reactions to various aspects of inservice training and were based on staff surveys. Few LEAs undertook an overall evaluation to ascertain the effectiveness of current staff training. Rather, the inservice training was evaluated on a session-by-session basis. These session reviews were informal, although session evaluation efforts varied greatly among the sites.

Usually, the better procedures were those in which questionnaires were used. The questionnaire items addressed various aspects of the training session. These informal, session-oriented procedures were less rigorous at some sites. At one site, the evaluation consisted of the staff development director merely asking the training leader "how things went."

### Involvement of the Community Advisory Committee and Parents in Local Evaluation Planning

During the site visits in 1979, CACs had reported that they were involved in evaluation activities related to special education programs. However, there was a discrepancy in several of the accounts of CAC chairpersons, RLA directors, special education directors, and superintendents as to whether the CAC actually participated in evaluation activities. All the CACs and RLA directors stated that they believed the CAC should play a role in evaluation. Some special education directors and superintendents, however, did not believe that evaluation was an appropriate CAC activity.

In the interviews this year, school personnel responsible for evaluation rarely mentioned direct participation by parents or CACs in formal evaluation activities. At only 1 of the 10 sites were we told of an evaluation study that actually was carried out by a CAC. That evaluation concerned parents' satisfaction with the site's special education program. At one other site, respondents indicated that, via formal surveys or informal channels, parents did provide indirect input by voicing their concerns about particular aspects of the special education programs. The majority of respondents, however, indicated that parents were not involved in planning or carrying out evaluation activities.

### The Use and Impact of Evaluation at the LEA Level

Evaluations were carried out at the local level for various reasons: They served as a basis for the improvement of programs and services, they guided budget and program decisions, but primarily they were used for public relations purposes. Usually, evaluation efforts and policy planning did not go hand in hand. Evaluations were carried out to produce results that were complimentary of the program, and where findings were negative they were not published. Only at one site were evaluation and planning ongoing commitments. Most evaluation efforts were discrete, one-time procedures rather than part of the overall policy-planning process.

In several sites, evaluations did provide the basis for formulation of RLA policy. For example, respondents in one site reported that their personnel utilization study resulted in a total reorganization of RLA structure. An evaluation in another site included a study of IEPs and assessment records. This study revealed that 12% of the IEPs were missing or incomplete and that 13% of the students' records contained inadequate assessment information. In response to these findings, the site instituted a file-review process carried out by program specialists. Reportedly, this

procedure upgraded the quality of student records. However, these were exceptions, not the rule.

A much more common finding was that goals for evaluation activities were developed to justify existing plans, to comply with state requests for an evaluation report, or to serve public relations and publicity needs. Not surprisingly, those evaluations that were planned and carried out as public relations activities were not very informative and were of limited use in planning for program improvement.

Most evaluators indicated that they did not find the results from state and federal evaluations very useful to them at the local level. Respondents noted that they considered state evaluations as being too theoretical and unrelated to practical local program needs. Respondents reported that state audits had the greatest effect on program planning because of the potential fiscal consequences of audit results.

At most sites, respondents believed that local evaluations were of most value at the local level rather than the state level. Some local evaluators commented that they believed their reports were shelved at the state level and had very little effect on state-level special education planning.

Several reasons were cited for the lack of use of evaluations at the state level. Some evaluators mentioned the relatively poor quality of local evaluations and their belief that objectivity was sometimes difficult to maintain in the face of local pressures. Also, they noted that LEAs performed evaluations using different evaluation goals and studied diverse topics. Given these variations in site activities, many local evaluators expressed their skepticism about the state's ability to present a comprehensive overview of special education programs through the synthesis of local evaluations.

#### The Dissemination of Results of Local Evaluations

The results of evaluations usually were communicated informally throughout the site. Although evaluation results generally were public information, written reports of results typically were not distributed to either parents or teachers. Respondents in several sites reported that they distributed copies of evaluation reports to the CAC. Generally, evaluation reports were circulated among special education administrators, but not all evaluation reports were public information. The site that conducted the personnel utilization study did not allow public release of the results.

In general, the intent of the evaluations influenced the extent to which the results were distributed. When evaluations were planned and performed as public relations activities, the results were widely distributed but were not particularly informative.

## Conditions Conducive to Accomplishing Local Evaluation

Our investigations indicated that a budget, administrative support, and specific personnel who are responsible for evaluation were necessary for local-level evaluation to take place. These conditions were missing in most of the sites we visited. In more than half of the sites, either a very low level of funds or no funds at all were budgeted specifically for evaluation. When asked about the amount of money spent on evaluation, respondents at four sites could provide only estimates. The amounts ranged from very little to \$25,000, with most of the money allocated to personnel salaries. However, in general, the personnel time commitment to evaluation was limited. Usually, the site administrator responsible for evaluation reported spending no more than 1 to 10% of his or her time on evaluation. In only two of the sites did we find personnel who spent 50% or more of their time on evaluation.

Even where a budget existed, not all budgeted monies were spent on evaluation. At one site with a substantial budget of \$25,000 and four evaluation projects planned, we found that three of the projects apparently had been abandoned. The fourth project had not been started, although it was late in the school year. At this site, an undetermined portion of the budget had been diverted to develop special education high school graduation criteria.

Respondents often indicated that the reason planned evaluations were either not started or not completed was that little administrative or staff support existed for such activities--evaluation was not assigned a high priority. Given that funds were not specifically tied to evaluation but were taken from a general fund, evaluations were not encouraged when money was in short supply. Some respondents also indicated that attitudes at the sites toward evaluation were generally negative. Some local evaluators were frustrated by what they characterized as a "so what" syndrome.

Local evaluators also reported that no strong incentives existed for LEAs to perform evaluations. Apparently, these respondents did not see any special value in evaluation. They commented that preparing the final evaluation reports for the state was costly and that the reports seldom contained negative findings and probably were never used. Some local evaluators did have a more optimistic view, however, stating that the evaluation process promoted valuable dialogs between administrators, teachers, and parents. Where such attitudes were prevalent, the chances of finding initiated and completed evaluation activities were greater.

## The State Role in Evaluation

The State Department of Education faces a considerable challenge in the area of evaluation and data acquisition. It must satisfy federal data and evaluation requirements while providing information necessary for state-level policy decisions. While accomplishing both of these objectives, the state must also strive to impose as little additional burden on the LEAs as possible and assist local agencies in developing their own data acquisition

and evaluation methodologies. To meet this challenge, the SDE has instituted the Evaluation Improvement Program (EIP), adopted a policy of gathering the minimal information required by federal law, and is striving to follow a policy of collecting a common core of data for use at the state level.

EIP personnel report they have carried out professional development and technical assistance (TA) activities for special education program evaluators in numerous areas. They report that the SDE's TA efforts were designed to help local sites develop their own techniques and procedures for collecting and reporting program information punctually and accurately to their own staffs, local boards, and to the SDE. The TA efforts were aimed at achieving approvable evaluation plans agreed to by local boards. The program stressed that plans should be tailored to the region and its governance structure. EIP personnel reported emphasizing local needs and local goals in their program.

Through two data acquisition committees, the SDE has tried to control the reporting burden placed on LEAs by reviewing all data acquisition forms and procedures. Department personnel indicated that one committee is an internal SDE body and that the other is made up of representatives from LEAs and other agencies throughout the state. These committees review and make substantial changes in proposed forms. This is considered to be a field--testing process by the SDE. However, it does not produce the same results as would an actual on-site collection of information using the new form. Only through an in-the-field trial process can questions regarding definitions and procedures arise, and many of the types of questions that arise cannot be anticipated by a general review and discussion within committee review.

The data gathered by the SDE, the substance of local evaluation reports and plans, and the findings of several state-initiated special studies are then integrated to form the SDE's overall evaluation of special education that is submitted annually to the legislature. This effort constitutes the major thrust of the SDE's formal activities in the area of special education information acquisition and evaluation. To our knowledge, the SDE does not carry out other formal comprehensive state-level evaluation activities related to special education that address global policy issues or issues of long-range policy planning. Although the SDE gathers a considerable amount of data to satisfy federal demands, the potential uses for these data, in terms of long-range policy planning, still remain untapped.

### Differences Between Local and State Policy Needs

An important weakness in the SDE's overall policy strategy is that it tends to obscure the significant differences between local and state evaluations. Local evaluations, if they are to be useful, must reflect local policy needs and generally focus on a single program or aspect of the program and are intended to meet internal organizational needs. Thus, they are carried out at the district, school, or classroom level. The local evaluation examines internally managed procedures and processes and those events

within local control. Moreover, LEAs deal with practical local issues using diverse methods and measures to study different topics and to attain local goals. Various unique public relations needs and political pressures also exist. In contrast, state-level evaluation is external, across districts, and at higher levels of aggregation. The emphasis is on state-controlled variables relevant to state policy needs.

Thus, the sources of variation in local studies can pose considerable problems in using these evaluations for state policy planning. The information from LEAs that are fulfilling the reporting requirements of PL 94-142 can be useful for state policy planning, however. LEAs have increased their data handling capabilities, and many LEA record systems show potential for the development of important MIS capability over the next few years. As they improve their own internal data handling capabilities, LEAs will be able to provide this information for the state more easily. Currently, much information gathered and maintained at the local level is not used, although considerable time, effort, and money are spent on data collection.

One factor important to the effective use of information at the state level is the collection of comprehensive and consistent information from all LFAs throughout the state. Although state policy currently calls for the development of a common core of data, practice does not reflect policy. Numerous changes in data requirements have been made over the past several years, as mentioned in the previous section. An example of this is that the flow-of-student information was gathered only in MP areas during the current school year. In addition, all disaggregated categories should conform to the realities of special education programs. For example, forms with personnel data requests should provide categories for program specialist and resource specialist information. The form used to request the 1978-79 and 1979-80 staff data did not have program specialists and resource specialists among the listed personnel options, nor will the 1980-81 forms; this omission is currently being corrected and these two personnel classifications will appear on 1981-82 reporting forms. Also, the directions accompanying the form failed to state specifically in which category such personnel were to be counted. The state should standardize all data collection forms so that LEAs report the same information.

Because of federal requirements, the collection of information will undoubtedly continue, and the state can only benefit by making as much use as possible of the information it must collect. However, given our findings at the individual site level, we believe that the state will need to enhance its auditing function to help ensure that data from LEAs are as accurate as possible. The state should continue to gather data to support state-level evaluation efforts and to upgrade and improve data collection methodology. The state cannot currently rely entirely on local evaluation efforts because those activities are sparse and limited in scope and usually are not carried out in a rigorous manner; consequently, the intensity and quality of evaluations vary greatly.

To assist LEAs with data collection, the state should clearly define a minimal set of data to be collected, as well as establish uniformity in data collection procedures. A part of this minimal information set must be the

flow-of-students data critical for planning, budgeting, and evaluation. The data that are collected are most useful in the form of disaggregated units. LEAs should not be asked to collapse the data they report into aggregated, broad categories. For example, LEAs should provide data by individual handicapping conditions and not report information in a collapsed form that only indicates the four MP handicap categories. Likewise, LEAs should report data separately for elementary and secondary students for the reasons outlined in the preceding section.

### Planning for Master Plan Sunset Review

With the passage of SB 1870, the date for termination of Master Plan has been extended to June 1985. The current independent evaluation by SRI will be completed by January of 1982, so a 3-year period will elapse during which no formal comprehensive evaluation will be performed except for studies carried out within the SDE. We believe that numerous issues must be considered in anticipation of the sunset review of this program. The types of issues that need clarification are the following:

- . Specific goals of the sunset review and how outcomes are to be used (i.e., local program improvement, compliance monitoring, state policy purposes, or all these issues).
- . The specific policy questions that must be addressed and whether addressing them is technically possible.
- . Level of the evaluation--State, district, school, class.
- . Focus of evaluation--Grade (primary, secondary), handicapping conditions, program areas.
- . Frequency of the evaluation effort--Yearly or only during the year before sunset review.
- . Responsibility for the evaluation--Identification of who will carry out the evaluation--LEAs, SDE, other state agency or agencies, independent contractor, or a combination. If a combination is used, determination of how all the information will be integrated and synthesized and who will be responsible for that task.
- . Funding--Whether specific funds should be targeted directly toward the evaluation and, if so, the appropriate funding level.
- . Monitoring evaluation activities--Determination of how the evaluation activity or activities will be monitored and by whom (i.e., through the SDE, other state agency, legislature, or a combination).

These topics are not intended to be exhaustive but represent the types of issues that must be resolved. Only after such questions have been clarified can one begin to define and organize the information requirements and data collection strategies necessary to carry out the sunset

sunset review. Here, too, a number of problems arise that will need definition. Typical issues are as follows:

- . Depth of information to be collected--Determination of how much and what types of information will be collected and from which populations. This evolves directly from the previous task of defining the goals and policy questions to be addressed.
- . Frequency of data collection.
- . Responsibility for defining data acquisition procedures to be used.
- . Level of data aggregation--Grade, student, handicapping condition, program areas (district, county, LEA, state).
- . Participation--Determination of whether participation in the evaluation by LEAs should be mandatory or voluntary. If mandatory, identification of who will enforce participation. This issue is important in light of past practice, which allows districts to decline to participate in evaluation activities.
- . Appropriate instrumentation that will reflect data needs and an evaluation design consistently implemented.

### Summary of Findings

The findings this year on record keeping, data management, and evaluation activities are summarized as follows:

- . The accuracy of data reported to the state varies considerably in terms of pupil counts, flow-of-student information, and reports on personnel.
- . The lack of clear directions for the proper recording of information leads to a misunderstanding of what is to be reported and in which categories, thus contributing to inaccuracies.
- . In the past, data collected have varied annually, so using state data to analyze trends over time is difficult.
- . Although the SDE gathers considerable information to satisfy federal reporting requirements, the potential uses of these data in terms of state long-range policy planning still remain untapped.
- . LEAs did not view local evaluation as a high priority, and only in one site did we find a high-quality, extensive, and comprehensive evaluation effort being conducted.
- . Where local evaluations were carried out, they generally were responsive to local political or public relations pressures, had a narrow program focus, and suffered from methodological problems.



- . The following factors were found to contribute to the absence of evaluation activities at most sites: lack of administrative support, lack of budgets, lack of specific personnel assigned evaluation responsibility, and no obvious incentives to carry out local evaluations; no penalty exists for failing to carry out planned and approved projects.
- . Most respondents believed that local evaluations were of little use at the state level and believed that their reports had little effect on state special education planning.

### Recommendations

The recommendations based on these results are the following:

- . The state should increase its auditing activities so as to enhance the accuracy of reporting procedures at the local level.
- . Clearer directions for the reporting of information should be developed, with special care taken to assure that the types of information requested adequately reflect and are consistent with terms used in local special education programs.
- . A special effort should be expended to upgrade the quality of flow-of-student information, not only because it is a federal reporting requirement, but also because it is important to the state in terms of its utility for long-range policy planning.
- . The state should strive to collect the same information over a period of years. If changes are made, considerable lead time should be planned to allow for alteration of data collection routines.
- . Field-testing of new data reporting forms should be performed at local sites; this would indicate to LEAs the direction of change for any new data demands and would allow them to contribute to the design of the forms.
- . Whether information is new or old, feedback provided by the state to the LEAs would help to create understanding of the uses of state-required information, as well as inform LEAs where they stood with respect to the other LEAs in the state.
- . Currently, local evaluations are required under legislation. If these activities are an important state priority, consideration should be given to improving their quality and providing incentives to assure that they are performed. The state EIP has taken steps to improve the quality of local evaluation, but several years of operation will be required before noticeable overall improvement is observed.

- . In view of the current level of quality and utility, as well as the low priority placed on evaluation at the local level, we believe that in addition to continuing the EIP, the state should consider adopting an approach that in the short run would support local evaluations through a state-level competitive grant program open to LEAs, special education service regions, or other school administrative structures. Such a program would focus limited funds in a more productive way by allowing for the review of projects and the selection of those that were of the highest quality. It would also allow for more careful monitoring of local efforts, highlight state technical assistance needs, and be more cost beneficial in that accounting for local evaluation dollars could be more accurate.



## THE ROLE OF THE RESOURCE SPECIALIST

### Overview

In developing the Master Plan, the legislature recognized the needs for special education staff to provide regular teachers and parents with consultative help regarding students who were being integrated into the regular classroom as well as to assure that the students' programs were efficiently coordinated. The position of the resource specialist was created to fill these needs. The legislation specifies numerous responsibilities of the RS. Through the RSP, instruction and services are to be provided for special education students identified by an assessment team and assigned to a regular classroom for a majority of the school day. Table 10 shows that in MP areas, this program serves nearly half (41%) of all students identified for special education services. In addition, the RS is to provide information and assistance for special education students and their parents, as well as consultation, resource information, and materials for parents and regular education staff members. The RS is to coordinate the services provided for each student served through the RSP as well as assess each student's progress on a regular basis, revise IEPs, and refer students who are making inappropriate progress to the Educational Assessment Service.

Even though each RS is to be given one or more aides, this is a lengthy list of services for one person to deliver at a school site. During our initial site visits and survey in 1979, administrators and parents throughout the state commented on the importance of the RSP as well as on the magnitude of the job expected of RSs. Some believed that only a "superperson" could accomplish all RS requirements and that expecting any one person to do so was unrealistic, especially given their case load of 24 students.

The role of the RS was selected as an issue to explore in greater detail in 1980, and during our site visits, many RSs again commented on the overwhelming nature of their job. The following comments are representative of those expressed across the six MP sites we visited:

There are too many expectations/requirements set by law that cannot be accomplished by one RS due to case load and lack of time.

There is more stress on the RS than on anyone else in the school; teachers, parents, and kids need all you've got in every way, especially in stamina and expertise and emotional stability.

I think it is quite difficult to accomplish all that is expected of an RS and not work 12 hours a day.

Help! We are exhausted.

Table 10

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS  
SERVED IN MASTER PLAN AREAS  
FOR THE 1979-80 SCHOOL YEAR

	<u>Designated Instruction Services</u>		<u>Resource Specialist Program</u>		<u>Special Class</u>		<u>Hospital or Home</u>		<u>Nonpublic Facility</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Communicatively handicapped	15,396	22.02	412	0.59	2,202	3.15	3	.00*	33	0.05	18,046	25.81
Physically handicapped	3,881	5.55	126	0.18	1,182	1.69	504	0.72	1	0.00*	5,694	8.14
Learning handicapped	2,820	4.03	28,202	40.34	11,556	16.53	124	0.18	186	0.27	42,888	61.35
Severely handicapped	<u>133</u>	<u>0.19</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>0.03</u>	<u>2,971</u>	<u>4.25</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>0.05</u>	<u>124</u>	<u>0.18</u>	<u>3,282</u>	<u>4.70</u>
Total	22,230	31.79	28,760	41.14	17,911	25.62	665	0.95	334	0.50	69,910	100.00

\* Less than 0.01%.

This section of the report discusses the activities RSs are currently involved in, the tasks that RSs would prefer to spend more time on, and several recommendations for enhancing the ability of the RSs to meet the demands of their role. The perspectives of the RS as well as of the regular classroom teachers and RLA directors are represented.

During the 1980 site visits, we interviewed groups of RSs at both the elementary and secondary levels. First, the RSs completed a 5-page questionnaire asking about their case load, activities on which they spent the most time, and how they would prefer to use their time. The questions also addressed the use of aides, and space was provided for the RSs to offer any suggestions for changing or improving the program. A group discussion followed the completion of the questionnaires.

Groups of regular classroom teachers who had special education students in their classes for part of the day were also interviewed during the 1980 site visits. They were asked to complete a 3-page questionnaire that included a question on how much time they spent with the RS, whether or not this was a sufficient amount of time, and how valuable the RS was to them.\*

Ninety-two RSs and 93 regular classroom teachers in six MP areas were interviewed during the 1980 site visits. In four NMP areas, 66 LDG teachers and 39 regular classroom teachers were interviewed. In many of the areas, we asked the RS or LDG teachers to select regular classroom teachers who would be willing to spend 45 minutes to talk with us after school. Because of this, we found that we were often talking to the exceptional regular classroom teachers in these interviews. These teachers were willing to spend after-school time with us and often cited positive experiences with the RS program. The RLA directors were also asked to comment on the RSP during personal interviews.

In addition to using the 1980 site visit information, we also analyzed the 1979 questionnaire data from the RS's perspective. Responses to pertinent questions were categorized by type of special education teacher. This allowed us to single out the responses of RSs and to compare these responses with those of the other types of special education teachers. From 25 major areas throughout the state, 1,697 special education teachers (of whom 453 were RSs) had responded to the 1979 questionnaires.

From the questionnaires and group discussions, we have summarized RSs' responses regarding the following four topics:

- . Case loads
- . Involvement in mandated activities

---

\* Copies of the questionnaires for the RS, LDG teacher, and regular classroom teacher are presented in Appendix B.

- . Involvement in mandated activities
- . Use of time
- . Preferred use of time.

Case Loads

As Table 11 indicates, during our 1980 site visits RSs at the elementary level reported an average case load of 26 students, whereas RSs at the secondary level reported an average case load of 30 students. Both case loads are higher than the recommended 24 students; however, the case load is within the upper limit of 28 at the elementary level, while this number is exceeded at the secondary level. LDG teachers in NMP areas reported the same pattern, but the average case load at the elementary level is substantially lower for LDG teachers than for RSs (23) and substantially higher at the secondary level (34).

Table 11

COMPARISON OF AVERAGE CASE LOADS FOR RESOURCE SPECIALISTS AND LDG TEACHERS

<u>Level</u>	<u>Case Loads</u>	
	<u>Master Plan Resource Specialists</u>	<u>Non-Master Plan LDG Teachers</u>
Elementary	26	23
Secondary	30	34

Involvement in Mandated Activities

RSs were also asked whether or not they were involved in various activities. These activities are required of RSs by the legislation, but we also asked LDG teachers about their involvement in these activities in NMP areas as well. Because LDG teachers frequently are those who become RSs under Master Plan, we were interested in the extent to which their role might change after implementation of Master Plan. Table 12 compares the responses of RSs and LDG teachers by elementary and secondary levels.

Table 12

PERCENTAGE OF RESOURCE SPECIALISTS INVOLVED IN VARIOUS  
ACTIVITIES, AS REPORTED DURING THE 1980 SITE VISITS,  
COMPARED WITH RESPONSES OF LDG TEACHERS IN NMP AREAS

Activity	Master Plan Resource Specialist		Non-Master Plan LDG Teachers	
	Elementary	Secondary	Elementary	Secondary
Direct instruction	100	100	100	100
Advising and consulting with regular classroom teachers	100	100	100	100
Providing inservice training for regular classroom teachers	90	90	54	36
Consulting with parents	100	100	100	100
Assessing students and writing IEPs	100	100	97	100
Attending SAT meetings	100	100	100	100
Completing paperwork related to instruction	98	98	100	100
Completing paperwork related to administra- tive duties and the SAT meeting; processing referrals; and coordinat- ing the identification, assessment, and annual review of students	100	100	95	92



One hundred percent of the respondents at both levels in MP and NMP areas reported being involved in direct instruction, advising and consulting with regular classroom teachers, consulting with parents, and attending SAT (School Assessment Team) meetings. The only difference in activities reported by RSs as compared with LDG teachers was in provision of inservice training for regular classroom teachers, the RSs reporting significantly greater involvement in that activity. This indicates that the major change for LDG teachers who become RSs will be the requirement that they provide inservice training for regular classroom teachers.

Table 13 shows responses of RSs to the 1979 survey. These data were generally supported by the findings of our 1980 interviews. The 1979 data show that more than 95% of the RSs in all MP areas had participated and believed they should participate in all the activities except screening students for special education programs and designing and implementing special education inservice training programs at the school. A slightly lower percentage of secondary RSs had participated in screening students (91.6%) and believed they should participate (93.7%) than elementary RSs (96.6% and 100%, respectively). Only 67.7% of the elementary RSs and 57.7% of the secondary RSs reported that they had designed and implemented special education inservice training programs at their schools. A higher percentage of both groups believed they should be participating in this activity (93.3% of the elementary RSs and 88.6% of the secondary RSs). An interesting finding is that, although all of the RSs interviewed during 1980 had advised and consulted with regular classroom teachers, a lower percentage of the RSs had provided formal inservice training at their school sites. This finding is supported by both the 1980 site visits and 1979 survey data.

Responses from the 1979 survey provide a much broader spectrum of teachers' opinions than our more limited 1980 interviews, and these 1979 responses show that significantly fewer LDG teachers reported that they had participated in or should participate in the following four activities (Table 13): processing referrals of students for special education, screening students for special education programs, assessing students for special education programs, and designing and implementing special education inservice training programs for the school. This suggests that these may be areas where LDG teachers will need additional training if they become RSs.

Another important component of the RS's job is the coordination of programs and services for students in their program. In 1979 we asked the teachers if they spent part of their time coordinating programs and services for special education students, and in 1980 we asked them if they coordinated services for students in addition to those they were instructing. Table 14 presents the responses from the survey and interviews and compares them with the responses of all types of special education teachers.

The 1979 survey data show that a high percentage of both RSs and LDG teachers spent at least part of their time coordinating programs and services for special education students (approximately 90% and 82%, respectively) and that these percentages were higher than those for other types of special education teachers. Our interviews with RSs and LDG teachers during

Table 13

PERCENTAGE OF RESOURCE SPECIALISTS RESPONDING TO 1979 SURVEY  
WHO PARTICIPATED OR BELIEVED THEY SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN VARIOUS ACTIVITIES  
COMPARED WITH ACTIVITIES OF LDG TEACHERS

Activity	Master Plan Resource Specialists				Non-Master Plan LDG Teachers			
	Did Participate		Believed Should Participate		Did Participate		Believed Should Participate	
	Elementary	Secondary	Elementary	Secondary	Elementary	Secondary	Elementary	Secondary
Processing referrals of students for special education	99.0	97.2	100	97.6	80.0	76.7	75.8	85.0
Attending placement meetings for special education students	99.5	99.5	99.4	100	93.5	93.5	100	94.9
Deciding educational goals and objectives and developing the IEP	99.0	99.5	100	100	97.8	97.9	97.4	94.7
Developing materials and instructional programs for special education students	98.6	97.2	99.4	97.7	97.5	97.9	97.4	94.6
Evaluating individual progress and individual programs for special education students	99.0	98.3	100	99.2	97.8	97.9	100	94.7

Table 13 (concluded)

Activity	Master Plan Resource Specialists				Non-Master Plan LDG Teachers			
	Did Participate		Believed Should Participate		Did Participate		Believed Should Participate	
	Elementary	Secondary	Elementary	Secondary	Elementary	Secondary	Elementary	Secondary
Screening students for special education programs	96.6	91.6	100	93.7	73.9	66.7	79.4	87.2
Assessing students for special education programs	99.0	98.4	100	98.4	73.3	68.2	81.8	80.0
Keeping parents of special education students informed of their child's progress	99.0	99.5	99.4	100	100	95.7	100	94.9
Designing and implementing special education inservice training programs for the school	67.7	57.7	93.3	88.6	42.5	29.7	80.6	86.8

Table 14

PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS COORDINATING SERVICES  
FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

Responses to 1979 Survey and 1980 Site Visits

Teachers	1979 Survey: Spent Part of Their Time Coordinating	1980 Site Visits	
		Coordinated for Students in Addi- tion to Those in Their Classes	Number of Additional Students
Master Plan resource specialists			
Elementary	91.2%	75%	27
Secondary	88.2	65	20
All Master Plan special education teachers			
Elementary	74.3	---*	--
Secodary	74.0	--	--
Non-Master Plan LDG teachers			
Elementary	81.8	40	6
Secondary	82.9	38	7
All non-Master Plan special education teachers			
Elementary	63.5	--	--
Secondary	76.3	--	--

\* We did not interview other special education teachers during 1980.

1980 supported these earlier findings and, in addition, we found that RSs also coordinate services for students who are not in their program, such as students receiving DIS. On the average, more elementary RSs spent their time coordinating services than secondary RSs and a higher percentage of elementary RSs than secondary RSs coordinated services for students in addition to the ones they were instructing (75% and 65%, respectively). However, as one secondary RS noted, "The faculty and the variables to coordinate are increased [at the secondary level]. This makes coordination of the program more time consuming [than at the elementary level]."

Clearly, most RSs are performing the activities mandated by the Master Plan legislation.

## Resource Specialists' Use of Time

### Time Spent on Instructional and Noninstructional Activities

In the 1979 questionnaire, we asked all special education teachers about the amount of time they spent on instructional and noninstructional activities (meetings related to special education and special education paperwork). This year, in examining the responses of RSs, we found that they generally spent somewhat less time on direct instruction but more time than the total special education teacher population in each of the noninstructional areas. RSs reported that they spent about two-thirds of their contractual time (66%) working directly with students, whereas special education teachers, as a group, spent 72% of their time in that activity. The RSs in the 1980 site visits stated that they were assigned to instruct students 19 hours a week and they usually spent 20 hours a week on instruction. Only 35% of the elementary RSs and 50% of the secondary RSs believed that this was enough time for that activity.

For noninstructional tasks, the 1979 survey data indicated that RSs spent an average of 6.5 hours per month attending meetings related to special education, whereas all the special education teachers spent an average of 5.5 hours per month attending meetings. The RSs also reported that they spent more time each week on special education paperwork than special education teachers: 8.4 hours per week compared with 6.7 hours per week. The RSs in the 1980 site visits estimated that they worked 44 hours during an average week. Two RSs in different areas stated:

As presently structured, it is at least two full-time jobs. The quality of effort is directly related to the willingness of the RS to put in extra time.

There is never enough time to get everything done, even when the aide takes home as much work as I do.

During 1980, RSs were asked to rank each of their activities by the amount of time they spent on each: 1 indicated the greatest time, 2 indicated the second greatest amount of time, and so on. Table 15 shows their responses to this question.

Table 15

SUMMARY OF TIME SPENT ON ACTIVITIES BY  
RESOURCE SPECIALISTS IN MASTER PLAN AREAS  
DURING THE 1979-80 SCHOOL YEAR

<u>Elementary Level</u>	<u>Secondary Level</u>
1. Direct instruction	1. Direct instruction
2. Assessing students and writing IEPs	2. Paperwork related to administrative duties and the SAT meeting; processing referrals; and coordinating the identification, assessment, and annual review of students
3. Paperwork related to administrative duties and the SAT meeting; processing referrals; and coordinating the identification, assessment, and annual review of students	3. Assessing students and writing IEPs
4. Paperwork related to instructing/ advising/consulting with regular classroom teachers	4. Advising and consulting with regular classroom teachers

Both elementary and secondary RSs reported they spent most of their time on direct instruction.\* Elementary RSs reported that they spent the second greatest amount of time in assessing students and writing IEPs and the third largest amount of time on paperwork related to administrative duties; the secondary RS reversed the order of these two items.

Preferred Use of Time

When asked which activities they would prefer to spend time on, both elementary and secondary RSs stated that they would prefer to spend the most time on instruction, as they were currently doing, but their second priority

---

\* This corresponds with the RSs' report in the 1979 survey that they spent about two-thirds of their time working directly with students.

was advising and consulting with regular classroom teachers. Assessing students, writing IEPs, and consulting with parents were the activities on which they reported wanting to spend the third or fourth greatest amounts of time. Table 16 summarizes this information.

Table 16

ACTIVITIES THAT RESOURCE SPECIALISTS WOULD PREFER TO SPEND TIME ON

Elementary Level	Secondary Level
1. Direct instruction	1. Direct instruction
2. Advising and consulting with regular classroom teachers	2. Advising and consulting with regular classroom teachers
3. Assessing students and writing IEPs	3. Consulting with parents
4. Consulting with parents	4. Assessing students and writing IEPs

During 1980, we also asked the RLA directors about activities to which they believed the RS should devote the most time. We received responses from directors of only three of the six MP areas visited. RLA directors in two of the areas were in general agreement that the RS should concentrate on direct instruction, assessing students, writing IEPs, and advising and consulting with regular classroom teachers. The assistant RLA director in the third area believed that, at the elementary level, the RS should spend the most time in attending and coordinating SAT meetings, then in assessing students, writing IEPs, and consulting with parents. He believed the RS at the secondary level should concentrate on direct instruction, then in assessing students, and writing IEPs. The RSs indicated that they do not want to spend a major portion of their time attending and coordinating SAT meetings because they believe they can best serve students through instruction.

When asked which activities they would like to spend less time on, 95% of both elementary and secondary RSs stated that they wanted to decrease paperwork related to administrative activities, such as the SAT meeting, processing referrals, and coordinating the identification, assessment, and annual review of students. Forty percent of both groups wanted to decrease paperwork related to instruction. Many RSs expressed frustration over the ever-changing forms that they were asked to complete. One commented:

The legislation is written broadly, yet when it simmers down to the local level there is an obsession to avoid law suits, etc., by more and more pieces of paperwork.

Another wrote:

I spend weekends to keep paperwork current and dates met.

Approximately 25% of both elementary and secondary RSs wanted to decrease the amount of time they spent attending SAT meetings, while a higher percentage of the elementary RSs (36%) and a lower percentage of the secondary RSs (22%) wanted to decrease the time spent on assessing students and writing IEPs. Less than 10% of the RSs wanted to decrease the amount of time spent in either direct instruction or advising and consulting with regular classroom teachers; these activities are clearly a high priority for RSs at both elementary and secondary levels. Table 17 displays these data. One RS expressed frustration about inadequate time to consult with the regular classroom teacher as follows:

To divide a case load of 26 kids between 2 people (RS and aide) when one [aide] works only 3/4 day, and to expect coordination of programs...plus testing and parent meetings is asking too much. I cannot be an actual resource to the regular classroom teacher.

#### Need for More Clerical Assistance

The RSs were also asked for their suggestions on making the RS job more workable. As Table 18 shows, when asked for suggestions for improving or changing their job, more than 50% of both the elementary and secondary RSs reported that they needed more clerical assistance, and 57% of the elementary RSs and 41% of the secondary RSs wanted their case load decreased. The aides were considered to be a crucial part of the RSP. As one RS stated:

Without aide help, the resource job would be impossible for any one person to accomplish.

Ninety-eight percent of the elementary RSs and 100% of the secondary RSs reported that they had an aide, but not all of them had an aide for the entire day. The elementary RSs who reported that they did not have an aide were all from a rural area, where the district had decided that, rather than have three-quarters of an RS plus one aide at the school, it would have one full-time RS without an aide. Table 18 shows the percentage of RSs who had full-day or part-time aides.

Some confusion may have arisen among RSs about what constituted a full day as opposed to a three-quarter day. It was apparent from written comments on the questionnaire that some RSs considered having an aide for 6 hours per day as three-quarters time, whereas others considered 6 hours to be a full day.

On the average, elementary RSs used their aides' time in the following way: 70% of the time for help in instructing students, 19% for help with clerical duties related to instruction, and 11% for help with clerical



Table 17

ACTIVITIES THAT RESOURCE SPECIALISTS WOULD  
LIKE TO SPEND LESS TIME ON  
(Percentage of Respondents)

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Elementary</u>	<u>Secondary</u>
1. Direct instruction	7	7
2. Advising and consulting with regular classroom teachers	2	5
3. Providing inservice training for regular classroom teachers	7	17
4. Consulting with parents	16	--
5. Assessing students and writing IEPs	36	22
6. Attending SAT meetings	24	29
7. Paperwork related to instruction	42	41
8. Paperwork related to administrative duties and the SAT meeting; processing referrals; and coordinating the identification, assessment, and annual review of students	96	95

Table 18

RESOURCE SPECIALISTS' SUGGESTIONS FOR CHANGING THEIR JOB  
(Percentage of Respondents)

<u>Suggestions</u>	<u>Elementary</u>	<u>Secondary</u>
Do not change the job	9	12
Eliminate activities	24	34
Provide more clerical assistance	57	56
Provide more professional assistance	39	37
Provide additional training	13	24
Decrease case load	57	41

Table 19

RESOURCE SPECIALISTS' REPORTS OF THE AVAILABILITY OF AN AIDE  
(Percentage of Respondents)

<u>Aide Time</u>	<u>Elementary</u>	<u>Secondary</u>
Full day	58	49
Three-quarter day	38	32
Half-day	4	17
Quarter-day	--	2

duties unrelated to instruction. The secondary RSs reported using more of their aides' time for clerical duties: 24% for clerical duties related to instruction, 19% for clerical duties unrelated to instruction, and 57% for instructing students. The RSs also stated that they considered this an appropriate use of their aides' time. Thus, even though RSs were using their aides for clerical assistance for 30 to 43% of the time, they still believed more clerical assistance was needed, and they were not willing to increase the amount of time the aide spent on clerical work at the expense of help with direct instruction. One RS who wanted to have one full-time aide for clerical work and another full-time aide for tutorial instruction commented:

Our aides are misclassified, overworked, and undertrained. Because of this, they are on the line [as] tutorial help whenever needed; this takes away time...from the clerical end of their duties. As an RS, I have a hard time setting priorities for my aide.

Another RS stated:

The role of our resource aide is very much different from that of an instructional aide in the classroom. I feel that their status should be upgraded!

The Resource Specialist Program from the Regular Classroom Teachers' Perspective

Because the RS is helping students who are in the regular classroom for the majority of the day, examining the role of the RS from the perspective of the regular classroom teacher is also important. However, again we emphasize that the regular classroom teachers interviewed during the 1980 site visits probably represent an elite group of regular classroom teachers throughout the state. These teachers were willing to spend their own time after school to discuss special education with us, and in some cases the RSs

selected them. Their opinions thus give us an idea of how well the RSP can work with dedicated personnel.

During the 1980 site visits, we asked the regular classroom teachers how many special education students they had in their classes, how much time they spent with the RS, and how valuable the RS was to them. The elementary teachers in MP areas reported having an average of 4.4 special education students in their classes, and the secondary teachers reported having 14.8 special education students. Only 2% of the elementary teachers and 8% of the secondary teachers stated that they did not meet with the RS. Teachers who did meet with the RS spent more time discussing the student's academic, social, and personal needs than special education procedures. Elementary teachers reported spending more time discussing special education procedures than secondary teachers, but this represented a small portion of their time: (1.1 hours per month for elementary teachers, compared with 0.6 hour per month for secondary teachers). Both groups reported about 3 hours per month discussing student's academic, social, and personal needs. During the group discussions, regular classroom teachers commented that estimating the amount of time they spent with the RS was difficult because they saw RSs on an informal basis--in the lunchroom, in the parking lot--whenever both of them had a spare moment. Table 20 shows the estimated amount of time regular classroom teachers reported spending with the RS.

Table 20

AVERAGE AMOUNT OF TIME THAT REGULAR CLASSROOM  
TEACHERS SPENT WITH THE RESOURCE SPECIALIST  
(Hours per Month)

<u>Discussion Topic</u>	<u>Elementary</u>	<u>Secondary</u>
Academic, social, and personal needs of students	3.0	2.7
Special education procedures	1.1	0.6

Table 21 presents the responses of regular classroom teachers to the question of how valuable the RS was to them. Of the elementary teachers, 90% believed the RS was very valuable in providing pull-out services and 92% found the RS very valuable in assisting with referrals. In contrast, 48% and 45% of the secondary teachers considered the RS valuable in these two activities. More than 75% of the elementary teachers in MP areas stated that the RS was very valuable in giving advice on contacting parents and in actually contacting parents for them, whereas less than 50% of the secondary teachers stated that the RS was very valuable in these areas. The only area where a higher percentage of secondary teachers than elementary teachers regarded the RS as "very valuable" was in assisting students with regular classroom assignments. This may be because the RSs at the secondary level

Table 21

DEGREE TO WHICH THE REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS BELIEVE  
THE RESOURCE SPECIALIST IS VALUABLE IN MASTER PLAN AREAS  
(Percent\*)

<u>Area of Assistance</u>	<u>Very Valuable</u>	<u>Somewhat Valuable</u>	<u>Not Too Valuable</u>	<u>Blank/ NA</u>
<b>Elementary</b>				
Providing information on teaching techniques	46	30	14	10
Providing information on behavior management	52	30	12	6
Providing pull-out services	90	10		
Assisting with referrals	92	4	4	
Advice on contacting parents	76	14	8	2
Contacting parents	78	12	8	2
Assisting students with regular classroom assignments	44	24	10	22
<b>Secondary</b>				
Providing information on teaching techniques	17	43	36	5
Providing information on behavior management	29	40	21	10
Providing pull-out services	48	24	14	14
Assisting with referrals	45	29	19	7
Advice on contacting parents	24	33	21	21
Contacting parents	48	26	19	7
Assisting students with regular classroom assignments	59	17	17	7

---

\* Percentages may not add to 100% because of rounding.

appear to serve in more of a tutorial function than at the elementary level, where RSs have distinct individual assignments. In the MP areas at both elementary and secondary levels, the area in which the lowest percentage of teachers regarded the RS as "very valuable" was in providing information on teaching techniques: Only 46% of the elementary teachers and 17% of the secondary teachers regarded the RSs as very valuable in this area, and 36% of the secondary teachers stated that the RS was "not too valuable" in this activity.

Regular education teachers expressed divergent opinions about the RSP in the 1979 questionnaire.

Overall, I feel that our RS is doing a fantastic job and that the program could only be better if it were expanded. It has made my job a little easier and those children involved have progressed further than they could hope to progress without special help.

If special education students are going to be in my class, I would like to be more aware of their needs--both emotional and educational. I would especially be interested in teaching techniques, especially for learning-disabled students. More personnel are needed to help with paperwork and more competent assessment of students.

As far as I'm concerned, the only time I've had any idea of what is going on while the child is not in my room is during the SAT meeting when the RS is telling the parent what the child is doing. There has never been any coordination between what I do in the class and what the RS is doing.

I don't feel that the RS is working with the children as much as she should be. She is spending too much time on paperwork...the RS does not work well with the classroom teacher.

I need more information and materials for my special education children. They get time with special help outside my room, but I need to know how to help them and the materials for my teaching, too.

### Problems and Suggestions for Change

When asked to comment on problems that were unique to the RSP at the secondary level, secondary RSs most frequently mentioned scheduling problems and the difficulty of communicating with numerous regular classroom

teachers. The following two comments from RSs are representative of the difficulties encountered at the secondary level:

It is practically impossible to keep up on each student's progress in all regular classes--as well as be in the classroom remediating. I have 80 teachers to contact this semester, not counting P.E.

Since students change classes so frequently, it is difficult to always consult with a student's teachers. It is also difficult for regular teachers to attend SAT meetings.

A comment made by the parent of a secondary student last year merits mention:

This year [1978-79] in junior high, it was frustratingly difficult to coordinate the tailor-made special education class (once a day) to the rest of his curriculum. The school simply was not organizationally able to provide my child with both fast lanes and slow lanes.

Other comments made by RSs during the site visits concerned their confusion regarding competency requirements and credits for graduation of special education students from high school. Secondary RSs were also concerned about what they considered to be an inadequate curriculum for special education students at the secondary level and the lack of appropriate programs, particularly access to vocational education programs. They commented, too, on the orientation of many regular classroom secondary teachers: Many of the teachers were used to lecturing on their subject and it was difficult for them to change their teaching styles to fit the needs of special education students in their classes. Of those teachers who met with the RS, a higher percentage of secondary teachers (32%) than elementary teachers (21%) stated that they needed more time with the RS. This may be because the secondary teachers had more special education students in their classrooms, so the amount of time they spent discussing each student was significantly less than that for elementary teachers. The secondary teachers also tend to be subject-matter oriented, whereas elementary teachers are more oriented toward teaching all needs. The remaining portions of both groups stated that they met with the RS for a sufficient amount of time. RSs felt burdened by the additional responsibility of counseling their students; some believed that the regular education counselors should be trained so that they are better prepared to make special education referrals.

Given the combination of the complexity of the secondary environment and the difficulty of the RS's job, the RS's case load at the secondary level should not be any higher than that at the elementary level. Yet we found that the elementary RS had an average case load of 26 compared with the secondary RS's case load of 30. The elementary RS reported an average school enrollment of 425 per RS, whereas the secondary RS reported an average of 665 students for each RS. Some RLA administrators stated that they were placing emphasis in the RSP on the elementary students to "nip the problem in the bud"; others said that elementary programs received emphasis

because far more elementary students than secondary students were in the program.

Over the past 2 years, we have found a general consensus among teachers, parents, and administrators regarding the difficult tasks and numerous responsibilities expected of the RS. However, it has also become evident that the RS performs an important function at the school site in serving to close the communication and service gap between regular education and special education, at least for students in their program. Resolving some of the problems encountered by the RS to make the program run more smoothly is not easy. For example, if the RS case load were to be increased, the RS would have even less time to spend on those activities that all agree are important: direct instruction and consulting with teachers and parents. If the case load were decreased, the number of students could probably not be decreased enough to provide sufficient extra time for the RSs to meet all their demands, irrespective of the prohibitive additional costs such a decrease in case load would engender. The answer lies in trying to find ways to make the best and most efficient use of the RS's time. The RS is a highly trained professional who appears to be spending a considerable part of his or her time on paperwork--some of which could be done by clerical staff. Therefore, the provision of additional clerical assistance (other than the RS aide) would free the RS and the aide so that they could spend more time on direct instruction and consulting.

This assistance could be particularly valuable in arranging SAT meetings and helping with paperwork related to either administrative matters or instruction. However, some RSs reported having difficulty hiring highly capable aides, and one RLA director reported that many parents in his area did not want an aide teaching their children. Yet, from our interviews with teachers and administrators, we have observed that the special education RS aide functionally is used as a tutor and performs instructional duties under the direction of the RS. Unlike aides in other programs, the aide in the RSP--particularly at the elementary level--is used as a tutor. Thus, providing additional training for aides, changing their title from aide to tutor, and increasing their pay would help attract and keep competent assistants. Parents would also more readily accept the assistance of a trained tutor in helping their children. This strategy could benefit RSs at the present case levels at a relatively minimal cost increase with potential increases in efficiency.

In responding to the questionnaire, many of the RSs in rural areas did not believe they had problems that were unique to their more isolated environment, but in our discussions with them, numerous difficulties were uncovered. One important difference in rural areas is travel time. In addition, one RS noted that the more isolated a school was, the less satisfactory were the services available on site. Another commented that because DIS is funded according to hours per day of instruction, this tends to penalize rural areas where travel time is substantial. Other comments from RSs in rural areas included problems of transient families; the lack of facilities, personnel, and classes for students with certain types of disabilities; and the length of time required--as much as half a year--for nurses and psychologists to complete assessments. RSs in isolated rural schools

depended a great deal on program specialists as a communication link and for emotional support--more than did RSs in more urban/suburban areas we visited.

The site visits revealed that a successful RSP cannot be guaranteed through legislation. Much of the program's success depends on the competence of the individual RS. As one parent commented in the 1979 questionnaire:

I believe the personality of the people involved in special education is as important as their credentials--sometimes even more so. A teacher who has trouble relating to children or other adults will not be effective. I feel we've experienced this in the past year and a half. Now we have a new resource specialist about whom I've heard nice things. I have great hopes for the future.

The RS must be a person who is respected, accepted, and supported by the regular education staff and the school principal. Principals who are not familiar with or receptive to special education and the RSP can severely restrict the RS's ability to carry out her or his duties. Thus, inservice training for local site administrators is important to help them understand the benefits of the program.

The RS must also know the school staffs and be able to establish rapport so as to work well with them. Many RSs mentioned that a crucial program component was matching each special education student with a regular classroom teacher who was willing to receive the child and who would work well with the child, the RS, and the parent. This matching of students and teachers was easier for RSs who were not newcomers to the school.

Some RSs wanted more definitive entry/exit criteria for the program, whereas others preferred the latitude that the present criteria gave them. During the site visits, we had the impression that the criteria in many areas were loose enough that a sophisticated RS could qualify almost any student for the program whom he/she believed was in need of help. Almost all were frustrated by their belief that more children needed their help but had not yet been identified.

The RSs were also overwhelmed by the large amounts of paperwork required by law. They wanted the paperwork decreased or at least kept consistent from year to year; they were tired of the constant changes in forms.

When RSs are split between two schools, they should be given additional aide time to assist them in this difficult situation. However, RSs should be split between schools as infrequently as possible, because of the difficulty in scheduling consultation sessions with regular classroom teachers. Splitting an RS between two schools significantly decreases the RS's visibility and availability to students and regular teachers. School districts are already trying to avoid this situation whenever possible.

Program specialists in one area believed that time management courses had been particularly helpful to RSs. These workshops have helped the RSs



establish priorities for their numerous responsibilities and thus have increased the efficiency of their efforts.

The regular education staff said, time and time again, that the RSs were valuable because they provided them with specific suggestions about how to help an individual student in their class. More communication between the RS and the regular staff should be encouraged, but, under current circumstances and practice, this is difficult. At the elementary level, the regular classroom teachers have very little time to schedule activities outside the classroom, and at the secondary level each student has several regular classroom teachers with whom the RS should communicate. Some regular classroom teachers wanted the RS to observe the special education student in the regular classroom occasionally; if the RS received additional clerical help, such visits might be possible.

Personnel in some areas believed that Child Study Teams were particularly effective as a means of informal inservice training. These teams, formed at the school site, consisted of the RS and volunteers from the regular education staff. The team served as a screening group when a regular education teacher believed a student might be eligible for the RSP. The Child Study Team discussed the case and suggested alternative teaching techniques that the teacher could try before the child was formally referred for special education assessment. These meetings offered the time and place for the RS and regular education staff to exchange ideas and information, but the district had learned that they were successful only when teachers wanted to be on the committee.

### Summary of Findings

Regarding the RSs' participation in required activities, the findings were as follows:

- . Elementary RSs reported an average case load of 26 students, and secondary RSs reported an average case load of 30 students.
- . Between 90 and 100% of both elementary and secondary RSs stated that they were involved in all activities outlined in AB 1250.
- . Although all the RSs interviewed during the 1980 site visits had advised and consulted with regular classroom teachers, both the 1980 site visits and the 1979 survey data indicated that a lower percentage of the RSs had provided more formal inservice training at their schools.
- . The 1979 survey data showed that approximately 90% of RSs spent part of their time coordinating programs and services for special education students, and the 1980 data showed that a higher percentage of elementary RSs than secondary RSs (75% to 65%, respectively) coordinated services for students in addition to the students they were instructing.

The findings on RSs' use of time were as follows:

- RSs appear to spend more time on noninstructional activities than the total special education teacher population. The RSs reported spending about two-thirds of their contractual time working directly with students, 6.5 hours per month attending meetings related to special education, and 8.4 hours per week on special education paperwork.
- Ninety-five percent of both elementary and secondary RSs expressed their desire to decrease paperwork related to administrative activities, and 40% of both groups wanted to decrease paperwork related to instruction. Less than 10% of the RSs wanted to decrease the amount of time spent in either direct instruction or advising and consulting with regular classroom teachers.

The findings on the RSs' use of aides were as follows:

- Ninety-six percent of the elementary RSs and 81% of the secondary RSs reported that they already had an aide for at least three-quarters of a day. More than 50% of both elementary and secondary RSs in the 1980 site visits requested more clerical assistance. Most of the RLA directors recognized the need for additional clerical assistance.
- Secondary RSs reported using their aides a greater percentage of the time for clerical duties than did elementary RSs.

The findings on regular classroom teachers' perception of the RS were as follows:

- Ninety-eight percent of the regular classroom elementary teachers and 92% of the secondary teachers with special education students in their classrooms stated that they met with the RS and found this valuable. More time was spent discussing the students' academic, social, and personal needs than in discussing special education procedures.
- Elementary teachers viewed the RS as more valuable than did secondary teachers. A higher percentage of elementary than secondary regular classroom teachers viewed the RS as very valuable in every activity listed except assisting students with regular classroom assignments.

### Recommendations

The information obtained during 1980 on the role of the resource specialist has led to the following recommendations for improving the Resource Specialist Program:

- . Provide clerical assistance for RSs during peak paperwork periods.
- . Change the title "instructional aide" to "special education tutor."
- . When RSs are split between schools, provide additional tutorial help for students.
- . Develop time and staff management seminars for RSs.

## CONDITIONS THAT AFFECT THE SUCCESS OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT

### Overview

In the Second Annual Report, we identified some serious shortcomings in special education staff development. Although more than 85% of the special education teachers reported that they had received inservice training, less than one-third of the regular classroom teachers serving special education students in their classes had received special education training during 1978-79. Thus, while staff development opportunities appeared to be plentiful for special education staff members, the opposite was true for regular classroom teachers. Indeed, many regular classroom teachers reported that they wanted training on special education topics. More than 75% of those surveyed said that they needed training in how to deal with special education students relative to social integration, academic instruction, and behavior management and in how to modify the regular program for those students.

Addressing the issue of development for the regular education teaching staff, the legislature stipulated in SB 1870 (Section 56243) that:

Each district, special education region, and county office shall ensure that all regular classroom teachers who provide services to individuals with exceptional needs receive the equivalent of at least one day of training each year relating to the needs of such students.

This legislative requirement is not accompanied by new program elements or by additional funds to implement it. Therefore, during 1979-80, one of our objectives was to describe how RLAs or districts provided training in special education techniques for the regular classroom teachers. In this section, we describe the few training program components that have led to relative success and recommend several policies that might promote more successful inservice training programs for regular classroom teachers.

We interviewed special education directors, staff development specialists, program specialists, resource specialists, principals, and regular classroom teachers who had special education students in their classes. In many cases, regular classroom teachers had been selected by the RS and all were obviously interested in special education and in helping special education students. Through the interviews, we were interested in learning how much inservice training regular teachers had received, how the training was provided, and what types of training they had found most helpful.

We found that the success of inservice training is related to the following conditions:

- . School site management of staff development activities and RLA management of planning, assessment, and evaluation activities.
- . Formal staff development budgets.
- . Local administrative support, organization, and provision of inservice training.
- . State technical assistance.

All these conditions need not be present in a successful program, but this section describes why each is important and how policies could promote their incorporation into staff development planning and implementation.

### School Site Management of Staff Development Activities

Strategies that seemed to produce a good staff development program for regular classroom teachers were based on extensive knowledge about the needs of individual schools, teachers, and students. Across the sites visited, we observed that programs were most highly rated by teachers when they had been designed for a specific school, group of teachers, or type of student problem.

The Master Plan RS served in a key role as a local source of information about special education. As a member of the school site staff, the RS was in the best position to understand the needs of teachers at the school and to provide special education administrators with this information.

The focus on school site coordination of services through the RS is a major benefit of the Master Plan program approach. Regular classroom teachers seemed to consider the ability of the RS to provide them with individual consulting as most valuable to them in meeting their immediate needs. Without exception, we found that regular teachers (both elementary and secondary) want specific information on how to work with students in their classes and have little or no interest in participating in more general and formal types of inservice training related to special education.

The general level of inservice training profoundly affected special education staff development opportunities. At the elementary level, the staff development plan was often organized at the school site and tended to include special education topics of interest to regular classroom teachers. Frequently, we noticed that school staff members included special education topics in the School Improvement Program (SIP) personnel preparation plan. Several RSs told us they were involved in SIP planning and were able to provide suggestions for appropriate topics. Teachers

appeared to be more committed to training when they or their colleagues had participated in developing the plan at their own school site.

At a few sites, we found that secondary RSs were associated with subject-area departments rather than being part of the special education department. Under this arrangement, they were more familiar with appropriate materials used by the departments and were regarded as peers and colleagues by the regular education staff.

### School Improvement Plan

We found that regular classroom teachers were receptive to special education training when the faculty selected the topics at the school site and then found someone to deliver the training. This method of identifying staff development needs was typically used in SIP schools, and we found that a high level of staff development was often associated with the SIP. RSs, as participants in topic selection, frequently were able to suggest special education skill areas that regular classroom teachers needed to develop.

Currently, the SIP only requires a general staff development component, and school personnel are expected to formulate a staff development plan to improve teachers' ability to meet the needs of all students. Generally this is being interpreted as covering general education, and special education is not always considered in this planning process. Because of the emphasis in SIP on staff development, a duplication of effort would be avoided if the integration of special education training under SIP were required.

### School Site Staff Development Budget

In one RLA, RSs used their materials budgets for minor staff development activities. Clearly, a materials budget is small and often the first item cut from a limited budget. However, the situation in this RLA is instructive. A small budget, coupled with administrative support, aided the RSs in planning school site activities for school staff.

Our strong impression was that the integration of special education training with other school activities encouraged closer cooperation between regular and special education staffs and served to discourage staffs from viewing these two areas as distinct.

### RLA Support of Resource Specialist Activities

With the support of a staff development specialist, who might research and develop materials, coordinate speakers, and handle other administrative details, the RS can identify staff development needs at the school site and serve as an important link between the regular classroom teachers and the special education experts. However, RSs cannot be expected to

develop and to deliver formal inservice training programs on a regular basis.

We observed two different programs that capitalized on the RS's knowledge of the students, faculty, and school environment. In one district, the staff development specialist compiled a notebook for RSs containing outlines of staff development workshops for regular classroom teachers. This notebook describes appropriate reading and audiovisual materials, training activities, and sample agendas. RSs are responsible for implementing the training sessions.

A county with a full-time staff development specialist provides more active support of the RS. The staff development specialist might attend a faculty meeting at the RS's invitation and conduct a few exercises to ascertain staff development needs. The specialist then would develop a program, based on needs identified by the faculty, and conduct it for the faculty.

### Child Study Teams

A few RLAs promoted the use of Child Study Teams at the elementary school level. Usually consisting of the school principal, a few regular classroom teachers, and RS or other representative of the special education department, these teams met to discuss problems that any regular or special education student may have and to recommend actions or teaching strategies to the student's teacher. In practice, the team served as a prereferral mechanism for special education services as well as a formal consulting forum for the RSs.

SDE officials and RLA administrators acknowledge that these teams have been very successful in some schools but believe they should not be legislated. SDE staff believes that such a requirement could become cumbersome because these teams may not suit a particular school environment. We found that the school staff must respect the team members and consider them as a source of knowledgeable advice. The intent of the Child Study Team could be undermined if the team were viewed as a training ground for poor or inexperienced teachers.

One county encouraged the development of Child Study Teams by offering, on request, a day-long training session for prospective team members. Team members were provided with general information on Child Study Team processes, as well as on techniques for identifying problems and for brainstorming solutions. These training sessions promoted Child Study Teams in a reasonable way, by building a good reputation for them rather than by making them a requirement.

### Planning, Assessment, and Evaluation Activities

Planning, assessment, and evaluation techniques varied among the areas we visited. Most of the RLAs relied on a committee of program special

ists, psychologists, RSs, principals, and regular classroom teachers to establish the basic goals of the training program. The committee gave the staff development director information from both the administrative and teaching levels of the regular and special education staffs. Moreover, these committees could lend important political support for joint efforts between the regular and special education establishments. Yet these committees' efforts were almost always global in nature and therefore were generally inadequate for determining a school's needs.

In all the MP areas we visited, staff training needs were assessed on a district or county-wide basis. This appeared to be helpful for general planning purposes, but most staff development directors stated that, at the very least, informal school-level needs assessments were also necessary. In one county, where a survey had been conducted to assess the county-wide staff development needs, the staff development director visited individual schools and supervised exercises designed to assess staff development needs to pinpoint specific needs at the school site. The staff development coordinator used this information to develop a special training program for the school.

Another district evaluated different aspects of its training program and assessed training needs yearly. This district has promoted special education staff training for several years, and it is just now beginning to emphasize regular education teacher training. District administrators hope to use the RS to identify specific needs at the school site.

Efforts to evaluate training varied most among the different areas. Although a few areas appeared to be sophisticated in their evaluation techniques, most areas' efforts were very poor. In a few areas, questionnaires were routinely distributed that asked teachers to evaluate several aspects of the training session. One area intended to initiate follow-up sessions to monitor and analyze teachers' actual use of the skills learned. In contrast, evaluation efforts in other areas consisted of the staff development director asking the trainer "how things went."

### Formal Staff Development Budget

RLAs do not receive money from the state specifically for staff development, and rarely do they account for staff development activities in a separate budget category. Only two of the six MP areas and one of the four NMP areas we visited identified staff development money in a separate budget category and assigned substantial portions of their operating budgets to inservice training. The other seven areas either pulled money from a variety of sources to fund a few training sessions or conducted inservice training under categorical programs. These two methods did not encourage comprehensive planning, because training was possible only when excess money from other budgets was available. Therefore, connecting programmatic goals to an identifiable budget was impossible. In addition, staff development conducted exclusively under categorical programs in NMP areas was fragmented and usually overlooked regular education teacher training.



It is difficult to determine whether incentives such as additional pay or release time would overcome regular classroom teachers' resistance to participating in formal inservice training programs. Many teachers are at the top of their pay scale so that monetary rewards are not guarantees for obtaining participation. Whereas some teachers regard inservice training programs as a means for making them better teachers, others view formal special education inservice training programs as a liability. Not only does the training take time, it also results in a negative reward: Once they are trained, the teachers will be assigned students who have difficult learning problems.

Currently, it is possible only to estimate the amount of money being devoted to staff development activities. Certainly this makes development of state policy guidelines for local areas difficult. On the basis of the budgets we found, or were able to reconstruct, we estimate that based on current practice, inservice training for special education ranges from \$3 to \$11 per special education student. Thus, a state-level budget for implementation of staff development in special education at the local level could range from approximately \$1 million to \$3.5 million.

Local priorities most likely will not coincide with those of the state. Therefore, unless specific mandates are tied to dollars, it is not likely that inservice training for regular teachers will be carried out very aggressively at the local level. Consequently, if staff development is a high priority at the state level, at the very least the state should require local budgets and expenditure reports including funding sources. Direct expenditures such as speakers' fees and costs for substitute teachers and materials are relatively easy to document. Expenditure reports must include other support costs, however, such as administrative time devoted to planning and training.

### Administrative Support and Organization

In all MP areas, one employee, usually a program specialist, was responsible for staff development. In three areas this was a full-time position, and in the others staff development coordinators spent 30 to 50% of their time in building a comprehensive staff development program. This approach appears to be far superior to the practice in NMP areas where program coordinators generally devote no more than 20% of their time to staff development. In NMP areas, we did not find any single person responsible for all inservice training activities, and training usually concentrated only on special education staff. Consequently, regular classroom teachers generally are not included in training plans and program coordinators duplicate administrative efforts when each one organizes training sessions in each program area.

Information dissemination and inservice training activities were very closely tied in most RLAs, and most program specialists spent at least 5% of their available time contributing to staff development plans or providing inservice training. In a few of the areas we visited, the use of the program specialists was restricted to assessment and IEP development

activities. We believe that this approach fails to capitalize on the information dissemination function these individuals can perform.

We found that RLAs where one employee was responsible for coordinating staff training were better able to equalize the quality of training programs across schools and to direct a more aggressive campaign to provide training for regular classroom teachers. However, the existence of such a position did not of itself ensure a high-quality staff development program. Also necessary were a staff development plan that was appropriate for the RLA and a willingness to implement the plan among staff members at all levels--district administrators, principals, and teachers.

The importance of administrative support, including that of the school principal, was always mentioned as an important factor in effective implementation. Unfortunately, it is not a matter that can be legislated or mandated.

### State Technical Assistance

Most of the staff development coordinators we interviewed said that they attended meetings coordinated by SDE officials to trade ideas, discuss problems, and share successes. These meetings appeared to be extremely valuable to less experienced coordinators as well as to more experienced coordinators who were interested in increasing communication on these topics.

We also asked staff development directors and RSs about their participation in state-sponsored staff development sessions, and their reactions were mixed. A few directors said that they received help in planning training programs and obtained information about available materials and existing programs. Nonetheless, most believed the SDE-sponsored sessions were too general and too elementary for their staffs. Moreover, the directors believed the quality of the programs was uneven, and therefore they could not unconditionally rely on SDE offerings. Several administrators cited the same example to illustrate their dissatisfaction with SDE training: In its training package on fair hearings, the state emphasized the concept of fair hearings rather than the technical aspects of fair hearings, such as collecting evidence, interviewing witnesses, and deciding on appeals strategies that were the topics of greatest use to local staff. The state has reorganized its training packages very recently so that they are now broken down into functional topic areas. It is hoped this will allow areas to select good presentations and avoid others but we are not aware of any attempts to enhance quality control.

## Summary of Findings

The findings from our 1979-80 interviews regarding staff development were as follows:

- . Regular classroom teachers responded most favorably to school site staff development activities.
- . Although staff development planning, assessment, and evaluation activities were carried out at the RLA level, effective implementation seems to depend on school site planning, assessment, and evaluation as well.
- . The most effective form of staff development from the point of view of the regular classroom teacher takes place informally when the RS consults with them regarding specific classroom problems and specific student needs.
- . Formal staff development budgets did not exist in most areas including RLAs. Where they did exist, the budgets appeared to be based on spending \$3 to \$11 per special education student, which included the staff development coordinator's salary, speakers' fees, and substitute teacher and materials costs. Thus, an estimate of state costs for local implementation of staff development, based on current practice, would range from \$1 million to \$3.5 million.
- . In only 3 of the 10 areas visited was a full-time staff development specialist employed to coordinate staff development activities.
- . Staff development specialists praised the state's coordination of networking meetings for staff development personnel, but they reported that the quality of SDE staff development presentations for teachers was uneven and therefore that they could not depend on the state's offerings. In addition, most SDE sessions were found to be too general and too elementary for local staffs and consequently did not meet local needs.

## Recommendations

The concept of school site management of special education services through the RS at each school site is a very positive aspect of Master Plan and one that we believe the state should continue to encourage and capitalize upon. Therefore, the following recommendations are intended to emphasize school site management of staff development activities, support and expand the RS's consulting activities, and to encourage state and RLA accountability for staff development:

- . Currently, SIP only requires a general staff development component; thus, schools are free to include or exclude special education as a topic area in their plans. We recommend that the state consider

integrating special education activities into the SIP, which will enhance the staffs' awareness of the need for discarding the idea of a two-level (special education and regular education) system.

- . The concept of Child Study Teams appears to be well received at the local level, and the state might consider strengthening its technical assistance program and promoting this concept.
- . If the training of regular classroom teachers is a high state priority, we recommend that funds be specifically allocated for this purpose and that local areas be required to submit expenditure reports documenting the source of funds and all related expenditures so that determining how much is actually being spent on this activity will be possible.
- . SDE's efforts to coordinate networking meetings should be continued but the state should either reevaluate its state-sponsored staff development packages to improve their quality and make them more relevant to local needs or rely on locally developed programs.



## SCHOOL EFFORT TO INFORM AND INVOLVE PARENTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM PLANNING

### Overview

Many aspects of California's Master Plan for Special Education are matters of state policy, such as the use of a resource specialist to assist students in the regular classroom, governance issues, the establishment of local parent advisory committees, and funding formulas. However, parents' rights and issues of due process are matters of federal policy and are enforced through the U.S. Office of Civil Rights, under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Therefore, although these requirements are part of Master Plan legislation, they represent aspects of the program that must meet federal compliance standards and that must be implemented, regardless of whether or not a district is participating in the Master Plan program.

To comply with federal law and administrative regulations, schools must notify parents of the following rights:

- Children aged 4 years 9 months to 18 years of age who have exceptional physical, behavioral, or learning needs that cannot be met through modification of the regular school program are eligible for special education programs and related services.
- Individuals with exceptional needs and their parents or guardians are guaranteed the right to be fully informed about and involved in educational decisionmaking.
- To the extent possible, individuals with exceptional needs, including those in public or private institutions or other care facilities, must be educated in a program that promotes maximum interaction with the general school population.
- No test used for assessment or placement may discriminate on the basis of race or cultural background.
- If parents disagree with the educational assessment provided by the school, they may initiate a process for an independent assessment at public expense if it is determined that the school assessment or decision regarding placement was inappropriate.
- A list of the types and locations of educational records collected, maintained, or used by the school must be made available to parents upon request. Parents have the right of access to all educational records maintained by the school.

- . If information included in records is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of privacy, parents may request that such information be amended or deleted.
- . The confidentiality of "personally identifiable information" shall be protected by a responsible school official.
- . Parents must be given written notice of the proposed assessment plan and give their written consent before a special education assessment can be carried out or before a child is placed in a program. The parents must be provided with a report of the results of such an assessment.
- . Parents must be given written notice in the primary language of the home before any change is made in their child's placement.
- . Parents may participate in the development of their child's IEP and in the annual review of that program, and the school must provide the opportunity for such participation. Meetings must be arranged at a time mutually convenient to the parent and school.
- . Parents must be provided an opportunity to meet with school personnel at the parents' request regarding special education instruction and services, and they may bring a representative with them.
- . Parents may request a review of their child's program at any time.
- . Parents may withdraw their consent for assessment, placement, or services at any time.
- . If parents disagree with the school's decisions about placement, they have the right to a fair and impartial hearing conducted at a time and place convenient to them. If parents disagree with the decision of the fair hearing panel, they have the right to appeal this decision to the California Superintendent of Public Instruction.

In the Second Annual Report, we discussed parents' perceptions of the schools' or districts' efforts to provide information on special education programs and on parent involvement. In all areas, both MP and NMP, two of five parents believed that schools or districts were not making a concerted effort in this regard. Compared with parents of elementary students, parents of secondary students perceived the schools' effort to be less. Only 40% of the parents of secondary students indicated that they believed the school had made an effort to inform and involve them.

Parents reported a fairly high level of participation in specific formal activities required by law, such as attending placement meetings and participating in the IFP process. We did not find, however, that they understood the significance of these activities. A typical comment from a parent was as follows:

It is my opinion that the district does not encourage parent involvement in special education. I also feel that the parent's involvement in developing an individual education plan is limited--partly due to the lack of information available to parents of special education children and partly due to the attitude of some teachers and other administrators who feel that they know unquestionably what is best for every child.

A special education teacher wrote the following comment:

Parents go through IEP motions, but I sense they don't really understand all the changes of laws.

A parent in an MP area and one in an NMP area expressed the following opinions:

I think everyone does a very good job at going through the mechanics of the program....Although we are invited to these meetings, I get the feeling that everything has already been decided; there's basically no change, and all anyone cares about is getting our signatures on the proper forms.

There are still schools in my district which do not make available to parents anything about special education--not even a poster.... Parents' rights need to be discussed and then backed up in writing. Sending a parent a 4-page, 14-point "parents' rights" letter without an opportunity for discussion is sterile.

Thus, in our Second Annual Report, we concluded that although the letter of the law generally was being implemented (that is, parents were reporting high levels of attendance at meetings and participation in the IEP process), the spirit of the law--informed consent and a true cooperative effort between schools and parents--was yet to be fully realized.

Only 15 to 32% of the parents surveyed were relatively well informed about the law, their rights, IEPs, and referral, assessment, and placement procedures. The significance of this finding prompted us to pursue this topic in greater depth during 1980 by identifying areas that seemed to have been more effective in informing and involving parents. Therefore, we interviewed school personnel in each of the 10 sites visited during 1980 and collected any information that was available to parents, including statements of parents' rights and explanations of due process procedures.

### The Attitude of Special Education Personnel

The interviews during 1980 indicated that schools clearly recognize the need to meet the requirements of the law; in fact, this has become the issue of highest priority in many areas. In all cases, we gained the impression that schools do not want to invite fair hearings or law suits and therefore are making a good faith effort to comply with the law. Nevertheless, the concept of "rights" and "due process"--a concept applied only to special



education programs--has created an undercurrent of tension and conflict about the extent to which parents should contribute to the process beyond meeting the basic requirements of attending meetings and signing forms. An Educational Assessment Service coordinator in an MP area stated frankly:

I want parents to understand the law, but I don't want them coming into an IEP meeting with a list of goals and objectives. I encourage parent involvement, but a little knowledge can make them inflexible regarding their child's needs--they become an authority.

Although this attitude was not expressed as candidly by other people we interviewed, we did detect among school personnel a general anxiety that too much knowledge would only lead to disputes about assessment or placement or threats of and requests for fair hearings and law suits. Many school staff members consider that the requirement to inform parents of their rights undermines their professional competence and creates an environment of advocacy rather than an atmosphere of cooperation and caring. Consequently, many areas take a passive role in informing parents by providing detailed information only when a parent specifically requests it.

Another example of passive implementation found in one area was the practice of scheduling all IEP meetings sequentially in half-hour intervals, with the staff bringing the already written IEP into the meeting for the parent to sign. This problem has been addressed in the current draft of Title 5 Regulations, which requires school staffs to write the IEP during the IEP meeting.

### Difficulties in Achieving Parent Involvement

In defense of the schools, we found that not all parents want to be involved or that they have difficulty in participating because of family circumstances, as expressed in the following comments:

The main reason I have not participated more in school this year is that my husband is deceased, and I must work to supplement my children's Social Security.

I work every day for 8 hours, 6 days a week. I don't get to help Nick as much as I would like, so he is in the hands of the school for all his help.

I am a single parent, working full time. I would like more information on special programs and how I can do more in my very limited time at home.

The speech therapist sent me letters to come to talk to her, but I never had time.

Schools have encountered formidable problems in scheduling meetings with parents who work, parents who have other commitments, or parents who are simply uninterested. During the interviews, RSs indicated that they had

considerable difficulty in trying to obtain parents' written consent on every IFP. Some teachers reported working three nights a week during part of the year, driving across town during a half-hour lunch break to meet parents at their place of employment, or going to parents' homes in the evening. Most teachers viewed this as a noninstructional activity that did not make the best use of their time.

Teachers also indicated that the longer a student had been in a special education program, the more difficult it was to involve the parents in the educational process. They attributed this to parents' general satisfaction with their child's program, and this tends to be confirmed by the responses of parents to the 1979 survey: Most parents reported moderate to high levels of satisfaction with the program their child was receiving. Nonetheless, the parents also indicated that they believed they should be involved in providing information about their child and developing the instructional program and educational goals, as shown in Table 22.

Table 22

PERCENTAGE OF PARENTS WHO BELIEVED THAT THEY SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THEIR CHILD'S SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Area	Instructional Program Development		Deciding Education Goals		Contributing Information on the Child's Educational, Social, or Physical Needs	
	Elementary	Secondary	Elementary	Secondary	Elementary	Secondary
MP1	61	76	82	84	86	92
MP2	74	69	85	82	92	85
MMP	68	72	80	80	85	90

The staff serving students placed in special day classes appeared to make a greater effort to assist parents than did staffs serving students in other placements. Only severely disabled students are placed in special day classes, and because the staff members recognize this as a serious situation, they devote considerable time to explaining to parents available services and the implications of different placements. Moreover, comparatively fewer students are served through special class placements than through the RSP, so more time is available for individual attention. In fact, in some sites parents whose children were being recommended for special day classes were taken to visit classrooms where their children would be placed. Obviously, this is a very labor-intensive effort.

These general observations regarding parent involvement are supported by work being undertaken independently by Dr. Marian Stearns and her colleagues in the Education and Human Services Research Center at SRI International to examine the nationwide implementation of PL 94-142. Comments on problems in parent-school relations found in their study of PL 94-142 are excerpted from her project report in Exhibit A.

#### Methods Used To Inform and Involve Parents

In only 4 of the 10 sites did we find what we consider an aggressive and organized effort to inform and involve parents. In each of these sites, parents were provided with information on a regular basis. A parent from one of these areas commented as follows on the type of involvement that was being encouraged:

They gave me the choice of two classrooms and let me decide where my child would best fit in. If it didn't work out, we could have changed in 30 days from placement time.

One MP site had the most comprehensive program for informing and including parents in program planning. A program specialist was given the responsibility for developing and coordinating a Parent Facilitator Program, which was funded partially by the district and partially by a federal grant. Under the program, 37 parents of special education students were hired and trained to meet with other parents. The basic philosophy was that experienced and knowledgeable parents could best relate to the needs and concerns of parents with children who had special needs. These parent facilitators also worked with teachers to help them understand the anxieties and concerns of parents and to help them develop more creative ways to include parents in the education program. The facilitators attempted to model team behavior for both parents and teachers.

The same area also had developed a series of excellent materials for parents covering such topics as the assessment and placement process, the parent's role in record keeping, and the parent's role as a team member in the IEP process. The area had also written a description of some of the emotional trauma that parents of special education students might experience.

In only three of these four sites did we find a formal handbook for parents. In all three sites, the handbook was usually given to parents sometime during the initial assessment phase. In two areas, parents were given the handbook along with the Consent To Assess form; in the other area, it was given out at the first placement meeting. Because responsibility for distributing the handbook was not clearly specified, the handbook was not always given to parents, however.

Exhibit A

...factors other than PL 94-142, such as the Master Plan in California and the PARC decision in Pennsylvania, contribute to parents' increased expectations. Nevertheless, even in these districts, those parents with raised expectations who make demands on the schools usually represent only a minority of parents.

To look at the ways in which schools are responding to active, dissatisfied parents, we examined the findings from those districts where parental expectations have exceeded the schools' abilities to provide more services. As these are generally the districts experienced with due process hearings, the LEA response is in part an effort to prevent the dissatisfactions from escalating to formal complaints.

We frequently found that these schools were pulling back a little. Informal discussions between parents and school staff are reported to be less free and open than they were. For example, administrators and teachers might be less likely to tell parents that their child needs a service that is presently unavailable. In a few places there are even articulated administrative policies covering what staff should say to parents. A superintendent in one LEA circulated a memo stating:

It should be made clear by school policy that any recommendation made by a psychologist or social worker professionally qualified to make it does not bind the school district unless the employee is authorized specifically to do so.

Another superintendent stated that:

Policy should distinguish between a recommendation and a binding recommendation. "Suggestions" or "recommendations to investigate the need for" should be excluded as binding recommendations on the LEA.

A parent stated:

Schools are afraid to tell parents what is appropriate because they might have to pay for it...  
[T]hat is a burden on the professionals--they feel stress.

In another district, parents characterized the atmosphere as having "an undercurrent of walking on eggs" because administrators are concerned about district liability. In a small

Exhibit A (continued)

district, the school psychologist said that they are not recommending that parents seek services from outside agencies as often as they used to. As an example, he related the following story:

In the past we used to frequently refer individuals to the mental health facility for individual or family counseling. This year I made a very informal recommendation, saying, "This might be a help to your family." The school district received a bill for \$200. They went ahead and paid the bill simply because that was less costly than going to a hearing. Despite the fact that most parents would not think of sending the district the bill, we're going to be very careful of the way we make referrals in this county.

One observation we made is that those parents who are dissatisfied and who confront the schools tend to be those who are highly educated and have above-average incomes. Their children are not the disadvantaged ones who many advocates supporting the passage of PL 94-142 feared were excluded or erroneously classified under the existing systems. This is not to suggest that exclusion and misclassification are not occurring, but rather that we did not see these issues argued at the school level.

The topic of parent/school relations is a sensitive one when disagreement exists, because there is a natural tendency for parents and school staff to blame one another and to question each other's motives and sincerity. However, insofar as we could determine, the accusations that parents and school personnel hurl at each other are sometimes valid and sometimes not. For example, the tendency of school personnel to blame parent dissatisfaction on unreasonable expectations and on fulfilling their own, rather than their child's, needs is sometimes quite justified and at other times merely a rationalization for inadequate performance. Similarly, the tendency of parents to blame school personnel (administrators more often than teachers) for inadequate services or caring more about bureaucratic convenience than their child's needs is sometimes justified and at other times is a way to vent feelings of guilt, frustration, or related feelings. In one district, two sides were clearly expressed. The special education administrator offered this view.

Exhibit A (concluded)

Parents suffer from chronic sorrow. Parents sabotage realistic programming and voice unrealistic wishes for normalcy.

Two parents explained their feelings this way:

The special education director is inflexible and arbitrary...(T)he combination of program control from the director, fiscal approach to program and teacher schedule from the superintendent, and both holding low, unimaginative expectations for EMH students, equals trouble.

This increase in mistrust between parents and schools characterizes only a small minority of parent/school interactions. However, it is true that the small minority of parents who confront the schools monopolize the bulk of the time that some school system personnel devote to parents.

---

Source: These excerpts are from a report entitled, Local Implementation of PL 94-142: First Year Report of a Longitudinal Study. Prepared by SRI International for the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped, U.S. Department of Education, by Marian Stearns, David Greene, Jane L. David, Rhonda Ann Cooperstein, Anne R. Wright, Ellen Grogan Renneker, Alexis A. Flippen, Christine Padilla, John Cressey, and Georgia Gibbs (April 1980).

## Lack of Uniformity in Information Distributed to Parents

We found no uniform practice regarding when and what type of information was provided for the parent and certainly no uniformity in the content or format of information. Each district, RLA, or county office has developed its own materials with little guidance from the state. This practice has resulted in distribution of fragmented information and sometimes in the omission of important information. Exhibits B, C, and D are notices of parents' rights from two MP areas and one NMP area that demonstrate the range in quality of information.

The notices in Exhibit B appear on the back of two separate forms. The first is on the back of the Parental Consent for Assessment form, and the second is on the back of the Parent Notification of Referral form. All the necessary information is there, but it is written in a formal style that could be difficult for some parents to understand and that is neither very interesting nor attention getting. In addition, during the time between assessment and referral, the parent could easily misplace the form containing the first outline of rights.

Exhibit C has many of the features of Exhibit B in that these forms are given to the parent at different times during the process of assessment and placement. In contrast, however, these forms are written in a less formal style that is easier to read and comprehend yet is not condescending. An unappealing feature of these forms is the small type and the compactness of the format.

Finally, the single form reproduced in Exhibit D is short and easy to read, but it provides the parent with sparse information compared with the other examples. It also shifts the responsibility to the parent to obtain additional information.

The people we interviewed in districts and RLAs expressed their frustration about having to develop their own forms, IEPs, statements of rights, and the like with little technical assistance from the state. They tend to rely on each other for technical assistance through information networks. Given the importance of this area for compliance, we believe that the state should take a more aggressive leadership role by developing and providing standard state forms to be used at the local level. Local administrators were generally very receptive to this idea. This could lead to considerable overall cost savings by eliminating the need for development and printing at the local level. In addition, the compliance process would be strengthened if all parents in California were to receive the same information presented in understandable form. The wide variation in the quality and content of information currently disseminated would be eliminated and state monitoring activities would be much easier if all forms were standardized.

Exhibit B  
RIGHTS AND PROTECTIONS FOR THE PARENT AND CHILD

As a parent of a child who has been referred for possible placement in a Special Education Program, you have specific rights which must be guaranteed. It is important that you are familiar with these rights before assessment and placement decisions are made.

Please be aware of the following rights:

- . You have the right to receive prior written notification of any intent to initiate or change the identification, assessment, or educational placement of your child: any refusal by the school district to initiate or change the identification, assessment or placement.
- . You have the right to approve or deny assessment of your child. The district will not proceed with the assessment until receipt of your written permission to assess.
- . Have an individual pupil review completed within 35 school days following receipt of your written permission to assess.
- . You have the right to be invited to the School Appraisal Team (SAT) and/or Educational Assessment Service (EAS) meeting devoted to the discussion of the assessment findings and present information at the meeting, either in person or in writing through a representative; written consent must be obtained for any special education placement for your child.
- . You have a right to examine and receive a copy of all relevant school records contained in your child's file within five (5) days of written request. Information contained in school records will not be released without your permission.
- . If your child is found eligible for a special education program you have the right and will be encouraged to assist in the development of the Individualized Educational Program (IEP). The IEP will consist of goals and objectives and will be reviewed at least on an annual basis or at any time of your request. Whenever a significant change in the IEP is recommended you will be informed and may participate in the decision-making.
- . You have the right to select a representative such as a friend or professional advisor to assist you in decision-making relating to your child's program. Your advisor may participate with or without your presence.
- . Individuals with exceptional needs shall be educated in the least restrictive alternative educational setting to the maximum extent possible.
- . Special classes or separate schools shall occur only when education in regular classes cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

If you disagree with the schools SAT/EAS recommendations, you have a right to:

- . Request that your child's case be reviewed by the school district Central Educational Assessment Service.
- . Request in writing a hearing before a Fair Hearing Panel. Refer to Due Process procedures.
- . If the Fair Hearing Panel requests additional assessment, such assessment will be at the districts expense.



Exhibit B (concluded)  
DUE PROCESS

It is your right and option to appeal any decision regarding identification, assessment or placement. The following steps will help you with this process:

1. Submit a written request for a fair hearing to the superintendent or designee.
2. Within five (5) school days after the request you will have access to your child's school records.
3. Within ten (10) school days there will be an informal meeting with the superintendent or designee.
4. If the informal hearing does not resolve the issue a fair hearing panel will be formed within five (5) days. You will choose one of the three members of the panel.
5. You will be given notice ten (10) days prior to the fair hearing.
6. You will receive a written decision by the panel within ten (10) days after the hearing.
7. If the issue is not resolved contact the superintendent or designee regarding appeal to the State Superintendent within twenty (20) days.
8. If more information is needed regarding due process a copy of Title 5 regulations can be requested.
9. You may wish to obtain legal services. There is legal service provided by agencies at low cost or without charge, through local resources, to financially eligible persons. This will be made available to you upon request.

Exhibit C  
Referral/Review Assessment Request

PARENT INFORMATION AND RIGHTS

Dear Parent:

A variety of special education programs and services are available in the School District. These include specific services for temporary or relatively minor handicaps, such as adapted physical education or speech therapy; more concentrated educational help on a part-time basis, such as the resource specialist program; very specialized help in special day classes or centers; and instruction in homes, hospitals or institutions. We attempt to provide service in the setting which includes regular class children as much as possible and yet is appropriate to the needs of the special education student.

Referral: Your child has been experiencing problems at school and may be eligible for a special education program and/or services. A referral has been made by the person named on the other side of this form, for the reason indicated.

Assessment: An assessment is needed to find out more about your child and to determine whether a special education program is needed. The assessment plan on the reverse of this sheet shows the procedures to be used and the information needed.

You have at least ten school days to arrive at a decision before giving your consent for the assessment to begin. The assessment will not occur without your written consent so you may want to sign consent promptly and return the form to your child's school so the assessment will not be delayed.

No educational placement will be made as a result of the assessment until a meeting is held, to which you must be invited, and may attend and unless you give further written consent.

The results of the assessment remain confidential and are used only within the special education programs.

Meetings: When the assessment is completed the School Appraisal Team (SAT) will meet to consider the results and to make educational recommendations. A placement at your child's school may be recommended if your child's needs can appropriately be served by changes in the regular classroom or by special education services for less than half of the school day. Should your child require more intensive services the Educational Assessment Service (EAS) may need to obtain further information before meeting with you.

The SAT meets within 35 school days from the date of receipt of your written consent for the assessment. The EAS meets within 50 school days when additional assessment is needed. You have the right to attend these meetings when you can talk with the team about your child's needs, or you may prefer to present information through another person who will represent your views. You may participate in findings of eligibility, make recommendations, and assist in program planning with the team.

You will be notified in writing of the date, time, and location of the meeting. These may be changed to encourage your attendance. If neither you nor your representative agree to attend the meeting, a pupil services worker of the district, who is not directly supervised by the school principal, will serve as your child's advocate.

Independent educational assessment: If you disagree with the recommended educational decision or with the public school's evaluation, you have the right to procure an independent educational assessment of your child. This may be at public expense, however the school district may initiate a hearing to show why its' assessment or decision is appropriate. If the final decision supports the district's position you still have the right to an independent assessment at your expense. The SAT or EAS must consider the assessment and it may be presented to a fair hearing panel, if appropriate. Please contact the Special Education Department, telephone \_\_\_\_\_ if you need more information.

Participation: Your child will not be allowed to participate in any special education program and/or service unless you are told why such participation is necessary or desirable and you then consent in writing to your child's participation.

You may withdraw your consent at any time after consulting with a member of the SAT or EAS and signing the district form for withdrawal.

Community Advisory Committee (CAC): The Community Advisory Committee is a group of parents, teachers, community members, and school personnel who advise in the development and evaluation of our special education programs. You may be interested in providing information to the CAC or may want to contact it for additional information or advice. To contact the CAC chairperson, please call \_\_\_\_\_

Individualized Education Program - Part I

PARENT INFORMATION AND RIGHTS

Dear Parent:

The recommendations of the SAT or EAS on the front of this form show your child's learning needs and the program recommended. The forms and reports you received at the meeting show the result of the assessments and give you a summary of the things discussed during the meeting.

Due process parental rights: A conference with you and your representative will be scheduled upon your request.

You have the right to a fair and impartial hearing before a fair hearing panel if you disagree with the decisions the SAT and EAS may have made. The hearing will be concluded not later than 45 days after receipt of your written complaint and your request for a hearing. The hearing will be conducted at a time and place convenient for you and your child to attend. You have the right to examine any documents contained in your child's file and may be accompanied by a representative of your choice. You will first meet with a director of special education who will attempt to modify the recommended program or services to your satisfaction. If this meeting fails to resolve your concern to your satisfaction, a fair hearing panel of three qualified but impartial persons will be convened to hear your complaint. To ask for a fair hearing, send your written complaint to the Director of Special Education,

You have the right to have your child's progress reviewed by the EAS whenever you believe appropriate progress is not being made. Contact your child's special education teacher to request a review.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): If your child was admitted into a special education program, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) will be developed to show: present level of educational functioning; annual goals and short term objectives; specific programs required; date to start program and for how long; objective ways to know how much progress has been made; and provisions for maximum interaction, as appropriate, with the regular classroom program.

You will be asked to participate in writing the IEP and you will be given a copy of the plan. Changes to the IEP will not be made unless they have been discussed with you. It is suggested that you attend the IEP meeting with a written list of items you wish contained in the IEP.

A high school student's IEP will include alternative means to complete standards for graduation, as appropriate.

The teachers will later develop written short-term activities for your child designed to remediate the identified problems.

Review of progress: Your child's progress will be reviewed at least once a year. The SAT or EAS will confer with you about program progress and any recommended changes to your child's IEP or program. You have a right to attend these meetings where your information and participation is considered important.

Special education records: You have the right to review your child's records within five school days of your request, and may obtain a copy, for the cost of reproduction. You may authorize someone else to look at your child's records by signing a written request.

You may have corrections made to the records or may have the records removed for cause, as outlined in district procedures.

A log is maintained of persons, other than necessary school district staff, requesting information from your child's records and the reason for their request. You may inspect the log upon request.

When your child reaches 16 or has completed the 10th grade, he/she has the right to inspect the records. At age 18 your child has the right to give consent to release information.

If your child moves to another California school district the special education records must be forwarded to that district upon their request.

Community Advisory Committee (CAC): The Community Advisory Committee is a group of parents, teachers, community members, and school personnel who advise in the development and evaluation of our special education programs. You may be interested in providing information to the CAC or may want to contact it for additional information or advice. To contact the CAC chairperson, please call

Exhibit D

Pupil Personnel Services Office

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

NOTICE OF PARENT'S RIGHTS

Dear Parent:

Your child has been referred to Pupil Services for further study. This process involves evaluation and identification which is done only with signed consent of parent or guardian.

Special education programs have been developed to assist children with exceptional needs which hinder them from making normal progress. If special education placement is recommended, it is designed to provide for the most time possible in the regular program, in order to maintain the least restrictive environment for pupils with exceptional needs. Any placement of a child in special education programs also requires approval of the parent and parental involvement in program planning.

You should be clear as to the purposes and goals of the particular program which may be suggested for your child. If you have any further questions, please contact \_\_\_\_\_, the school psychologist at \_\_\_\_\_.

You will be informed of the time and place of meetings to plan for your child's education. Your participation in this planning is needed and, if necessary, it may be possible for us to reschedule consideration of your child's case. You may designate somebody to represent you and your child if you can't be there, or you may bring counsel with you if you wish. Within ten days after the meeting, you will be notified of the committee recommendations in writing.

If you wish to challenge the appropriateness or adequacy of the assessment or if you wish to appeal the recommendation and decision of the committee, you are entitled to a hearing by a panel in accordance with California Administrative Code, Title V, Sec. 3150-3177. For copies of these regulations or more information on these procedures, you may call this office

We sincerely hope that you find that we have addressed your child's needs and that his/her educational program is more effective as a result of our study.

Sincerely,

Director, Pupil Services

April, 1979

## Summary of Findings

The findings on schools' efforts to inform and involve parents were as follows:

- . Only 15 to 32% of the parents surveyed were fairly well informed about the law, their rights, IEPs, and procedures.
- . Parents reported a high level of involvement in activities required by law, although they did not appear to understand the significance of these activities.
- . Parents believed that the efforts of schools to involve them in their child's program were insufficient.
- . Most parents indicated that they wanted to contribute information about their child and assist in deciding on instructional goals and programs.
- . The schools' responsibility for informing parents of their rights and due process guarantees has diminished the school staffs' ability to create a cooperative atmosphere between the school and parent.
- . Schools have encountered formidable problems in scheduling meetings with parents who work, have other commitments, or are simply uninterested in being involved.
- . Only 4 of the 10 sites visited this year displayed a fairly aggressive effort to involve parents.
- . Each district, PLA, or county office was responsible for developing its own informational materials for parents, as well as IEP forms, and this has resulted in fragmented information and sometimes the omission of important information regarding parents' rights and due process.

## Recommendations

Our recommendations for assisting schools in informing and involving parents in the special education process are as follows:

- . The state could provide RLAs with valuable assistance by developing standard IEP, assessment, and parental rights forms. This could lead to considerable overall cost savings to the state by eliminating the need for development, printing, and revision of forms at the local level. It would also help to strengthen the compliance responsibility of the state by eliminating the wide variation in quality and content and would make state monitoring activities far easier.

- . Under current federal regulations, schools are required to make only a good faith effort to notify parents of meetings and to encourage their attendance. Acknowledging that some parents are simply uninterested in participating in these meetings, the state should develop a policy statement regarding what constitutes a "good faith effort" on the part of schools so that the limited time available to teachers and staff is spent in the most productive manner.



## THE USE OF OUTSIDE RESOURCES TO SERVE SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

### Overview

In fulfilling its responsibility to coordinate related services for special education students, SDE has negotiated and signed interagency agreements with the following five agencies:

- . California Children's Services
- . Department of Rehabilitation
- . Department of Mental Health
- . California state hospitals
- . Regional centers for the developmentally disabled.

Before the development of these agreements, each agency already was providing services for specific types of children and was receiving funding from state and federal sources. The intent of interagency agreements was to provide a more integrated and coordinated approach to the provision of related services as required by federal law and to avoid any duplication of services.

This section of the report discusses our findings on the extent to which local district, county, and RLA personnel were aware of these state resources, as well as of private resources available to students, and the extent to which these services were being used. To collect this information, we interviewed school personnel identified as being knowledgeable about the types of outside resources available and used and agency representatives at the state level and selected branch offices. Early in our site visits, we found that no single person within the district was aware of all outside services being used. Therefore, we also interviewed a selected number of county special education staff members and special education teachers.

The interviews were focused on the following topics:

- . Knowledge about state and local agencies and organizations that might be called on for services.
- . The use of these organizations and the types of services being provided.



- . The cost for services and who paid (district, county, agency or organization, or parent).
- . The number and types of students being referred to and served by outside agencies or organizations.
- . Whether the district or RLA encountered any difficulties in obtaining services or cooperation.

In these interviews, not only did we find that no single person was responsible for or aware of all the agencies being used, but also contradictory statements frequently were made about whether or not a particular agency or resource was being used. Knowledge of outside resource use was not uniform in any area--administrators were aware of resources available that teachers were unaware of and vice versa. The interviews also revealed that the quality and type of services provided by any single agency or organization vary from area to area.

In addition, we found that obtaining information on the cost of services or the number of children being served was impossible. Under the various billing structures, the school paid for all or part of the services, the parent paid if the child did not qualify under agency rules, or the agency assumed all the costs. The record keeping method did not allow for the breaking out of the costs for outside resources use. If the district or RLA paid for resources, a record of the child served did exist; but in many cases where agencies provided services without cost to the district, no records were kept of these interactions. Two areas had made a good faith effort to develop a record keeping system through their county MIS computers, but to date the system has fallen short of being useful. Moreover, even in these two cases, only services for which the district paid were recorded. School personnel in many areas expressed concern that the agencies are charging schools for services that in the past they had provided for clients free of charge. School staffs seemed to share a suspicion that agencies, knowing schools are receiving special funds for providing special education students with services, are becoming reluctant to assume service costs within their own budgets. Moreover, the state agencies are also beginning to experience the impact of limited resources and, as their own budgets begin to tighten, are exploring ways to pass on service costs.

MP and NMP areas differed little regarding their staffs' knowledge about the use of outside resources. What did seem to make a difference was the size and location of the service area. Although fewer services were available to small or rural communities, those communities seemed to take greater advantage of the services that were available, especially those provided by local clubs and service organizations. Rural districts appeared to have far fewer problems with red tape in obtaining services--a telephone call to a friend working in one of the agencies or to a member of a local club often brought immediate results.

On the other hand, RLAs and districts in metropolitan areas or suburban communities apparently found that providing special services themselves was

easier than contending with the paperwork and waiting periods associated with agency agreements. The people we interviewed in these areas often made the point that when a relatively large number of students were in need of a particular service, they believed that hiring specialists often was more cost-effective than paying agency fees for the service. However, we could not find any data or studies to support this conclusion and therefore have no way to evaluate its accuracy.

The amount of paperwork required and the difficulties of writing special or related services into an IEP when the district must depend on an outside agency to provide them does not seem to be worth the effort to many areas. In addition, under current agreements, the SDE and local districts have little or no enforcement authority over other state agencies.

### Respondents' Comments About Various Agencies

Comments we received about specific agencies warrant mention, so a synopsis of them from our interviews is provided for the following four agencies:

- . California Children's Service
- . Department of Rehabilitation
- . California Department of Mental Health
- . Regional centers for the developmentally disabled.

#### California Children's Service (CCS)

We received more consistently negative comments about CCS than about any other agency. Respondents in many areas expressed their displeasure with what they perceived to be CCS's lack of cooperation in providing related services for students. Comments included the following: CCS personnel do not relate well to parents; teachers have a hard time working with CCS staff because of disagreements about the kinds of services to be provided; CCS refuses to write into an IEP the services it will be responsible for providing; CCS fails to provide the kinds of services specified in the state interagency agreement; CCS refuses to serve a student from a developmental center; financial responsibility is unresolved.

CCS staff members defended the agency's position by pointing out that when the state decided to mainstream disabled students, CCS had extreme difficulty in providing the same level of service and needed therapy because students were dispersed throughout the district. In addition, CCS representatives said that after the federal and state laws had been implemented, schools began referring students who did not qualify for CCS's services or students who, CCS staff believed, could not benefit from therapy.

Not all comments or relationships with CCS were negative, however. In one of the areas, CCS has space and equipment on the school campus and provides physical therapy through five full-time therapists.

### Department of Rehabilitation

Overall, we found that the most cooperative relationship seems to exist between schools and the Department of Rehabilitation (Rehab). Many areas take advantage of services Rehab provides. In one area, Rehab provides vocational assessments for students. In another, it provides a vocational education specialist for high school students. In yet another area, Rehab trains a limited number of students and the school has a cooperative agreement with a local rehabilitation service to provide training for those students not included under the Rehab program.

An exceptional food preparation program in one NMP area had been partially funded by Rehab; it is not directly a part of the special education program, but special education students can enroll. This program is run as a restaurant for school personnel and is staffed entirely by students who learn every aspect of food preparation, including waiting on tables and being cashiers. As part of the program, students must obtain outside part-time jobs in food preparation and maintain their attendance and grades. Approximately 80% of the graduates of this program are placed in jobs.

In only one area did we find poor cooperation between the department and local district, and this was because the branch office was small and had an unusually high case load. Thus, Rehab was not willing to take on students until they were seniors or graduates.

An important finding was that districts had to take the initiative in obtaining services from Rehab. As a respondent in one area said, "We had to be persistent." Difficulties encountered by districts and RLAs seemed to stem from differences among Rehab regional offices in local implementation policy. For example, some offices were willing to provide services for students who were still in school, whereas others provided services only when students were out of school. A state department representative stated that, unlike other agencies, Rehab is not obligated to accept clients if funds are insufficient to pay for services. The department representatives also pointed out the other resource options available to schools, such as local workshops, community colleges, CCS, and the Department of Mental Health.

Many areas had tried to take advantage of community college programs, however, and their experiences had not been positive. We were told that local community college vocational programs generally did not cooperate in accepting special education students because their emphasis is on academically oriented vocational programs rather than on pure skills training. In addition, community college administrators were concerned about students' safety in vocational skills classes, even at the high school level. Many vocational education instructors apparently were reluctant to accept special education students in their classes because they must be supervised more closely and the chance for accidents around equipment is increased.

## Department of Mental Health

Cooperation between the California Department of Mental Health and the schools seemed to be mixed. In one area, health services were used extensively because of the high proportion of low-income families in the area. In a metropolitan area, the county mental health service provided a counselor at one of the high schools. In yet another district, the county mental health service ran a day treatment center and provided counseling for families of developmentally disabled newborns. In a suburban area, the county mental health service sponsored inservice training programs for parents of emotionally disturbed children.

In a rural area we visited, mental health services were available, but families were reluctant to accept them because everyone in the community knew who was going to the mental health clinic. Thus, a stigma was attached to use of those services.

In one area, the district had experienced conflict with the county mental health agency because the agency preferred not to work with children and was therefore reluctant to make any commitments of service or provide information requested by the school. In addition, the county charged the schools for these services. The district had discussed the state interagency agreement with the county mental health services agency, but the local mental health office chose to ignore it, even when the district threatened court action. Thus, the district has contracted with the private sector for provision of mental health services.

The most significant finding regarding the need and recommendation for mental health services is that, with few exceptions, teachers reported their reluctance to recommend psychological or psychiatric services for students. In fact, teachers in most areas reported that they had been given specific instructions not to recommend psychiatric services, even when they believed such services would benefit the student, because the school would be financially responsible for ensuring that the services were provided. This was not the case before implementation of PL 94-142. This raises the unresolved issue of the limits of the responsibility of the schools. Currently, the issue of what constitutes counseling services, as outlined in federal regulations and as interpreted by the Office of Civil Rights and the SDE, is a subject of considerable debate. Several suits have been brought in California districts over this issue, and the SDE recently (November 6, 1980) issued revised policies to clarify the provision of psychotherapy as a related service. However, as indicated in the following excerpt, the issue still remains ambiguous:

Psychotherapy is a related service where it is required for a child to benefit from special education. However, at this time, it must be provided by qualified persons other than a medical doctor.

A policy statement regarding psychotherapy will be issued as soon as the federal Office of Special Education statement is received.

The outcome of this continuing debate may have considerable fiscal implications for education and is an issue over which the state will have little policy control if it is to comply with federal law.

### Regional Centers for the Developmentally Disabled

Again, local personnel interviewed had mixed reactions about regional centers. Many areas used the regional centers and reported that cooperation was excellent, but others refused to use the services except as a last resort because they believed the centers advocated programs that were inappropriate for their students. Staffs from the regional centers were more reluctant than those of other agencies to discuss this issue with us. Essentially, the agency position is that it is strictly a coordinating agency. However, discussions with a local center representative indicated that some centers do provide services for students. Our impression is that any conflict that exists is due primarily to disputes over fiscal responsibility.

### Use of Other Nonschool Resources

We found scattered use of other types of local community resources to provide special education students with additional services or materials. Table 23 lists the types of organizations that were being used and the services or materials they were providing. Not all these agencies were used in every community, and not all services noted on the table for a particular organization were necessarily provided in every area. The use of these organizations seemed to depend on the quality of the relationship between school personnel and the outside community. In one NMP suburban community, we found extraordinarily good community support and cooperation, which we learned had historical roots.

Only in two areas (both MP metropolitan areas) did we find any published materials--an agency referral bulletin and a resource handbook--for the staff to use in seeking needed services. Both the bulletin and handbook have been categorized by service and contain addresses, telephone numbers, and descriptions of the services. In only one of these areas, however, is this information made available to parents. Most areas do not have any centralized way of keeping track of the kinds and types of agencies and resources that either staff or parents may contact. Frequently, resource information is stored in staff members' memories, especially in cases where personnel in charge of special education have been in the district for a long time.

### Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Overall, our assessment is that state-level interagency agreements have not been as useful for coordinating services as had originally been hoped, but they are certainly a necessary first step. Achieving intergovernmental cooperation in the coordination and provision of related services for handicapped students is very difficult because, in California, each agency is

Table 23

COMPOSITE OVERVIEW OF THE TYPES OF LOCAL COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS  
AND THE TYPES OF SERVICES OR MATERIALS THEY PROVIDED  
SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

Organization	Assistance Provided
Goodwill Industries	Vocational training and employment for graduates in several communities
Easter Seals Society	Summer camp and, in one community, a swimming pool for trainable mentally retarded students
Elks Club	Physical therapy in the home and instruction for parents on how to deal with their children
Lion's Club	Eyeglasses for needy students in several areas and in one area prostheses for students
Rotary Club	Hospice program for terminally ill
Kiwanis Club	Funds for special olympics and a greenhouse project for emotionally handicapped; walkie-talkies for children in wheelchairs; work experience
Muscular Dystrophy	Chairs and other needed equipment
Pacific Telephone Pioneer Club	Special play equipment for blind children in a nursery school
Assistance League	A dental clinic for all public school students in one community (excludes orthodontic work); parents pay \$5 per visit if they are able
District Child Welfare and Health Services Fund	One district has a fund supported by donations of school employees that provides needed services or materials for students whose parents cannot afford them and who are not otherwise eligible through other programs. Have helped pay dental and medical bills and purchased orthopedic shoes.

administratively and fiscally independent. The ability of the SDE to effectively implement, monitor, and enforce these agreements is limited because it has no authority to assure agency compliance. The legislature might consider the withholding of funds if agencies are found to be in non-compliance with state or local agreements. Such a mandate would in turn require oversight by the SDE and agencies and might best be achieved through a group composed of education and agency staffs responsible for monitoring and compliance evaluations.

The state has recommended that local districts, RLAs, and county offices develop independent local agreements with certain agencies to assure the provision of related services as outlined in the state-level interagency agreements. Understandably, local administrators are resistant to this request because it increases their own work loads, and they also view it as an unnecessary duplication of effort. Given that each of the agencies involved is a state agency, it is reasonable to ask why it is not possible for these agencies to assure the consistent implementation of these agreements throughout the state. The fact that this is not occurring suggests that a more focused study should be conducted to determine factors that are inhibiting the agencies' ability to support these agreements at the local or regional level.

The review of the use of interagency agreements was only a small part of our overall study and is clearly an area that demands more focused attention. However, several issues of importance require attention and are outlined below:

- . Because of state-level interagency commitments to provide services, the nonschool agencies should make a greater effort to ensure that services are provided more uniformly across regional offices.
- . The SDE's administrative role, fiscal responsibility, and enforcement authority should be clarified in law and become a part of the state-level agreements.
- . The state should consider requiring record keeping to identify the number and types of students receiving related services from outside agencies and the costs (either to the school or to the agency) for these services.
- . The development and negotiation of local agreements to support state-level agreements with noneducation agencies seems to be an unnecessary duplication of effort. Therefore, more attention should be given to the development of comprehensive state-level agreements that include formal mechanisms for consistent state-wide implementation so that the negotiation of local agreements will not be necessary.
- . To provide the SDE with enforcement authority, the state should consider the withholding of funds if agencies are found to be in noncompliance with the state (or local) interagency agreements.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FROM SECOND ANNUAL REPORT

Appendix A





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Overview of Activities

This is the second in a series of four annual reports to be submitted to the California State Legislature and the Governor as part of the independent evaluation of the California Master Plan for Special Education, as mandated in Assembly Bill 1250. This two-volume report presents the results of the data collection activities during the first year. Volume I is a nontechnical presentation of the research findings, and Volume II is a technical appendix that discusses in detail the methodological aspects of the work.

The purpose of the investigation during 1979 was to determine how special education programs are being implemented in districts, RLAs, and counties. Most of the information presented is based on findings from questionnaires sent to more than 6,000 special education and regular education teachers and to more than 3,000 parents of students who were receiving special education services during the 1978-79 school year. These samples of teachers and parents were randomly selected from 25 major areas throughout the state, representing 371 unified school districts and a total special education population of 97,576 students. All the Master Plan (MP) areas implementing the program during the 1978-79 school year were included in the sample (17 RLAs), as was a sample of eight nonparticipating units that were selected for their similarity to the RLAs already in the Master Plan. The characteristics used to match the non-Master Plan (NMP) group with the MP group were size of the student population, region of the state, total dollars spent per student, and the urban-rural nature of the district.

Findings are presented for the following four major topic areas:

- Personnel preparation
- Assessment and placement
- Program services and effects
- Parent knowledge, participation, and satisfaction.

Exhibits A through D are summaries of the findings on those topics.

In addition to collecting information via the questionnaires, the project staff visited seven MP sites and five NMP sites to interview administrators, school board members, and--where they existed--members of special education Community Advisory Councils (CACs). The information from these interviews is integrated into the report where it enhances or aids in interpretation of the findings.

Exhibit A

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FOR PERSONNEL PREPARATION

- At least 87% and 77% of the regular education elementary and secondary teachers, respectively, in the MP sample reported having at least one special education student in their classroom.
- Of the regular education teachers, more than half of the elementary teachers and more than three-fourths of the secondary teachers rated themselves as unskilled in instructing special education students.
- Regular and special education teachers in urban areas tend to be slightly more experienced than teachers in rural areas. They tend to have higher degrees, more credentials, and more teaching experience.
- In six MP areas, between 10 and 20% of the regular education elementary teachers reported having special education-related credentials. In no NMP area did more than 9% of the regular education elementary teachers report having a special education-related credential.
- Regular education elementary teachers are far more familiar with special education referral and assessment procedures than are secondary teachers. About four of every five elementary teachers are very familiar with special education programs, services, and resources. However, less than a third of all teachers are very familiar with either federal or state special education legislation and with parents' rights under these laws.
- More than 60% of the elementary MP regular education teachers reported that they are skilled in using special education resources available for students. However, less than 40% of the secondary teachers rated themselves as skilled in the use of those resources.
- Across all MP and NMP areas, less than a third of the regular education teachers reported attending inservice training programs. In MP areas, approximately two of five elementary teachers and about one of five secondary teachers reported attending inservice training programs.
- Special education teachers apparently are receiving a high level of inservice training, with 86% of all special education teachers reporting that they had attended a session during the 1978-79 school year.
- Less than one-quarter of the regular education teachers in the sample reported receiving incentives to attend inservice training, although certain incentives such as release time are provided for in the Master Plan legislation.
- More than 70% of all regular and special education teachers reported that inservice training is needed on basic assessment topics such as identification and assessment procedures. Teachers expressed the greatest need for inservice training on topics that they believe are part of their teaching role: Regular education teachers desire instruction on characteristics of special education students and more information about referring students; special education teachers expressed the need for more information on developing the IEP.
- More than half of the regular education teachers reported that they knew of only one inservice training session on an assessment topic. At least 78% of the special education teachers were aware of between two and five inservice training topics regarding assessment.

Exhibit B

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS ON ASSESSMENT AND PLACEMENT

- At least 75% of the special education teachers reported that they are somewhat to very familiar with assessment procedures, whereas more than 65% of the regular education teachers reported that they are totally unfamiliar or only fairly familiar with assessment procedures.
- At least 70% of the special education teachers reported that they are somewhat to very skilled in assessment procedures. In contrast, more than 79% of the regular education teachers reported that they are unskilled or only fairly skilled in most assessment procedures. However, 60 to 90% of the regular education teachers reported they are skilled in referral procedures.
- Regular education teachers were moderately involved in assessment procedures, whereas special education teachers were very involved.
- Regular education teachers were more involved in referrals and informal assessment; special education teachers were more involved in deciding educational goals and placement.
- Those teachers who had not participated in assessment procedures generally believed they had not been given the opportunity to do so.
- More than 84% of all teachers believed that the identification and placement procedures are working all right or very well.
- Special education teachers were more satisfied with identification and placement procedures than were regular education teachers. Teachers who believed the procedures worked all right to very well also believed students improved their general attitudes and educational and social skills.
- More than 75% of all regular education teachers believed that the special education students in their classes were appropriately placed. Teachers who believed they had inappropriately placed students tended to be more negative about how well the placement procedures worked, and they tended to detect a negative change in their students' general attitude.

Exhibit C

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS ON PROGRAM SERVICES AND EFFECTS

- A far higher proportion of students were identified as handicapped in MP areas than in NMP areas. The major difference was in the proportion of students identified as learning handicapped (LH) and communicatively handicapped (CH): Far more LH than CH students were in MP areas than in NMP areas.
- Because of differences in identification patterns, differences were also seen in placement patterns, with more students being served in less restrictive environments through Resource Specialist Program/Learning Disabilities Group (RSP/LDG) services in MP areas.
- Although most regular education teachers indicated that they had special education students in their classes for most or part of the day, less than 47% of the teachers in 20 of the 25 areas reported that they had Individual Education Programs (IEPs) available for these students. In three areas, virtually all the teachers said IEPs were not available to them. At the secondary level, the highest rate of response for teachers with special education students who had IEPs available was 28% in a NMP area.
- On the average, 40 to 50% of the regular education elementary and 70 to 76% of the regular education secondary teachers reported that they did not know whether the students in their classes were receiving the services outlined in the IEP.
- Between 20 and 30% of the parents reported that they did not know whether their child was receiving either all or some of the services outlined in the IEP. This varied across both MP and NMP areas, with parents in areas that had been in MP longest tending to be more knowledgeable about their child's program.
- Both parents and regular education teachers in MP areas indicated that the RS was an important resource, either in terms coordinating special education programs for students or in meeting with regular education teachers regarding the needs of special education students. Parents perceived that the RS, special and regular education teachers, and speech teacher shared responsibility in coordinating their child's program. In NMP areas, no single individual appeared to perform the same role of coordination or support for regular teachers. Of the MP elementary teachers, 77 to 85% reported that they had used the services of the RS.
- The RSP appears to be more difficult to implement effectively at the secondary level than at the elementary level, and it is more difficult to implement at both grade levels in rural areas than in suburban or urban areas.
- Across MP and NMP areas, both parents and teachers reported that they believed special education students would benefit more socially and academically from being in the regular classroom than would regular education students.
- More parents of elementary students than of secondary students believed that their child had improved (either somewhat or greatly) in terms of academic, social, and motor skills and in self-image. On the average, 60% or more of the elementary parents believed their child had improved. This did not differ significantly across MP and NMP areas.

Exhibit C (concluded)

- Parents in NMP areas reported having to provide additional services more frequently than did parents in MP areas, and parents at the elementary level tended to provide more services than parents of secondary level students. The most frequently provided additional service was tutorial and the second was transportation. At the secondary level, more parents reported providing additional psychological services in addition to tutorial services and transportation.
- Regarding additional services that parents believed schools should provide, the most consistently and frequently named across both MP and NMP areas was counseling.

Exhibit D

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS ON PARENT KNOWLEDGE,  
PARTICIPATION, AND SATISFACTION

- In the majority of areas, 38% or more of the parents indicated little or no familiarity with special education criteria and procedures. The percentages of parents who reported familiarity were higher in MP areas. Most likely, a parent's familiarity with special education criteria and procedures is related to the length of time their child has been receiving special education services.
- Parents' participation in the special education process was high, with 40% of the parents indicating high participation in most areas. The participation patterns were fairly similar at elementary and secondary levels and across MP and NMP areas.
- Parents' ratings of school or district efforts to provide them with information indicated that in many areas the school or district effort was low.
- In most areas, 70 to 80% of the parents reported being involved in the IEP development process. However, considerable evidence indicated that the involvement may occur with parents having little understanding of what the process really means. While parents attended Educational Assessment Service (EAS) and/or School Assessment Team (SAT) meetings and received and signed a copy of the IEP, two of five parents in most areas reported they were not familiar with IEP procedures and criteria.
- Most parents indicated that they were satisfied with special education programs and personnel.

## Synthesis of Findings

### Personnel Preparation

Perhaps the most significant finding about the level of personnel preparation is the lack of preparedness regular education teachers expressed in terms of their knowledge and skills in meeting the instructional needs of the special education students in their classrooms. Master Plan legislation emphasizes the need to provide inservice training opportunities for regular education teachers, paraprofessionals, volunteers, site administrators, and other administrative personnel; however, apparently little progress has been made toward the goal of bringing regular education teachers into the special education process.

During our site visits, administrators acknowledged the need for more inservice training for regular education teachers, but they also indicated that their efforts to provide adequate training opportunities were limited by such factors as lack of funds to provide release time, teacher contracts requiring voluntary rather than mandatory attendance at inservice training seminars, and lack of support and technical assistance from the state. During the site visits, we also discovered that many areas are probably not taking full advantage of local college and university resources that could help them plan and offer training opportunities to their teachers. Finally, coordination problems were also apparent in some multiunit RLAs, with no clear administrative responsibility being assigned.

The provision of inservice training is a complex and difficult problem, given the many factors that may affect an RLA's ability to provide opportunities for its staff. Nonetheless, we were able to identify some areas that have surmounted these problems to a great extent. A few areas in the sample have provided their teachers with a relatively high level of inservice training compared with the others. At this stage in the evaluation, we cannot identify the local factors that account for these differences in an RLA's ability to provide inservice programs. However, it is an area that we will explore in greater depth during 1980; next year we will be able to recommend possible actions for offering more training opportunities for regular education teachers.

### Need for Better Identification Criteria

Administrators and teachers agree that all students in need of special education services should be identified and placed in appropriate educational settings. However, great confusion and lack of agreement exist regarding the characteristics of students who fall within the LH category. The need for better identification guidelines was expressed by teachers in their written comments to us, as well as by administrators during our site visits. State enrollment figures for areas in our sample show that substantial differences exist across areas in the identification of LH students. Differences in overall identification rates of the special education target population seem to be due to the differences in this group of students.

Because the federal law requires that all eligible students be served and because eligibility requirements are so broad, potentially a far higher proportion of the student population could be identified than the federal upper bound of 12%. More important is the issue of whether some students identified by current guidelines truly belong in special education programs rather than in Title I or other compensatory or remedial programs such as the Miller-Unruh reading program. The failure to give serious consideration to revision of these guidelines (while at the same time assuring that the appropriate students will be identified) will have important fiscal consequences to both state and local education agencies.

Exploring this area in greater depth was not within the scope of this evaluation, and we are not in a position to make recommendations at this time. It is, however, an issue we believed important to bring to the attention of policymakers and we suggest a careful examination of current guidelines.

#### Importance of the Resource Specialist

In the responses to the questionnaire, the importance of the RS was a persistent theme. In MP areas, both teachers and parents recognize the RS both as the person responsible for coordinating programs for students in the regular classroom setting and local school site. However, the role the RS is expected to perform requires super powers, and most RSs complain that they cannot do all the tasks required of them; hence they must make choices and establish their own priorities. Given the choice, most RSs favor their role in working directly with teachers, students, and parents and believe that the administrative duties expected of them leave them little opportunity for the direct contact with students and teachers for which they believe they are most qualified.

Difficulty was apparent in making the RS concept work at the secondary level, and more difficulty was indicated in implementing the concept at both elementary and secondary levels in rural areas. At this stage, why this is the case is unclear; this will be a matter for consideration during 1980.

#### Confusion About the Role of Regular Education Teachers

Although regular education teachers appeared to be somewhat involved in the process of referring students and less involved in parts of the assessment process, a strong link is still lacking between the regular education program and the special education program. Most regular education teachers who have special education students in their classes reported that they did not have a copy of the IEP available to them; from the comments we received from regular education teachers, this means that they had very little information on the education needs or program goals of the students who were in their classes. We are unable to explain why IEPs were not available to the teachers. Certainly at the secondary level the coordination of a student's program and liaison with teachers becomes more difficult; but at the elementary level it was rather surprising that more teachers did not report having seen an IEP for students in their classes.



## Parents' Participation in the Education Process

Our findings showed clearly that although schools are meeting the letter of the law in terms of involving parents in the assessment and placement process, the spirit of the law has not yet been fully embraced in terms of making parents full partners. On the whole, parents seem to be participating in the process with little knowledge about either the availability of special education resources or a real understanding of their rights. This is not intended as a criticism of school administrations--the task placed on them by the legislation is a new and difficult one. However, the written comments from parents clearly indicate that many believe they are excluded and express their wish to be included in special education process; some clearly do not.

We were able to identify areas that have been reasonably successful at including parents more fully in the education process. During 1980, we hope to identify some of the strategies that have worked in those areas and report on them in the Third Annual Report.

## Governance and Funding Issues

Two issues not addressed this year but that will be of central importance during the 1980 evaluation are governance and cost. Several issues were raised during site visits suggesting the importance of these areas for further policy consideration.

### Governance

The Master Plan legislation requires regional administration through a new administrative unit, the RLA. It assumes that a minimum service size is necessary for certain services to low-incidence populations and that a designated unit is needed to coordinate services. During site visits, positive and negative governance aspects were raised. People we interviewed reported that Master Plan equalized special education services across the SESR. This equalization of services was recognized as beneficial by an official in an NMP area. However, objections were that Master Plan tended to be more beneficial to small districts than to large ones. The RLA concept does not appear to provide incentives for small districts to expand their own programs because they are allowed to transfer students to large districts that have already developed programs, thereby increasing the responsibilities of the larger districts.

The other governance issue raised most frequently in MP areas was one of lack of coordination between districts and the county, between the county and the state, and with interagency agreements. Some reports were that obtaining information from the state was difficult. Increased cooperation was called for between the state and the people who work in the field. People in both MP and NMP areas noted that interagency agreements were difficult to develop and, once developed, no monitoring agency really examined violations of such agreements.

People interviewed in the NMP areas voiced several concerns about Master Plan. Decreased local control was feared in both rural and urban/suburban areas. The new administrative level was criticized as being unneeded or possibly working less well than the old one. Also, conflicting opinions were expressed on how difficult implementing the county RLA would be in rural areas. On one hand, this might not be a problem in rural areas where the county had previously assumed a major role in providing services. Perceptions such as these could seriously hinder Master Plan implementation.

### Funding

The intent of the Master Plan funding formula is that it be tied to programs and services; this differs from PL 94-142, which is based on a per-student allocation. Personnel in both MP and NMP areas cited a variety of funding problems such as inequitable and inadequate funding. One district, an urban/suburban area that implemented Master Plan in 1978-79, believed RLAs that joined Master Plan in recent years received less money than those that had entered in earlier years. Administrators in areas that had implemented Master Plan in earlier years agreed that the funding formula needed improvement. A definite problem has been created by the failure of the state to follow the funding formula as outlined in the legislation.

Respondents in the MP areas were also critical of the way in which the funds were distributed. Administrators in some areas noted that they were uncertain about how much money they would receive, which made planning difficult. In other areas, people we interviewed objected to the way in which the RLAs were distributing funds by filtering special education funds through the RLA, resulting in failure of districts to receive what they believed they were entitled to receive.

Respondents in the NMP areas also reported several funding issues. Respondents in four of the five NMP areas we visited reported that funding for special education was inadequate. Educators in the NMP areas were concerned about what they believed would be the increased costs of implementing Master Plan, such as transportation costs that would increase as children were transported farther.

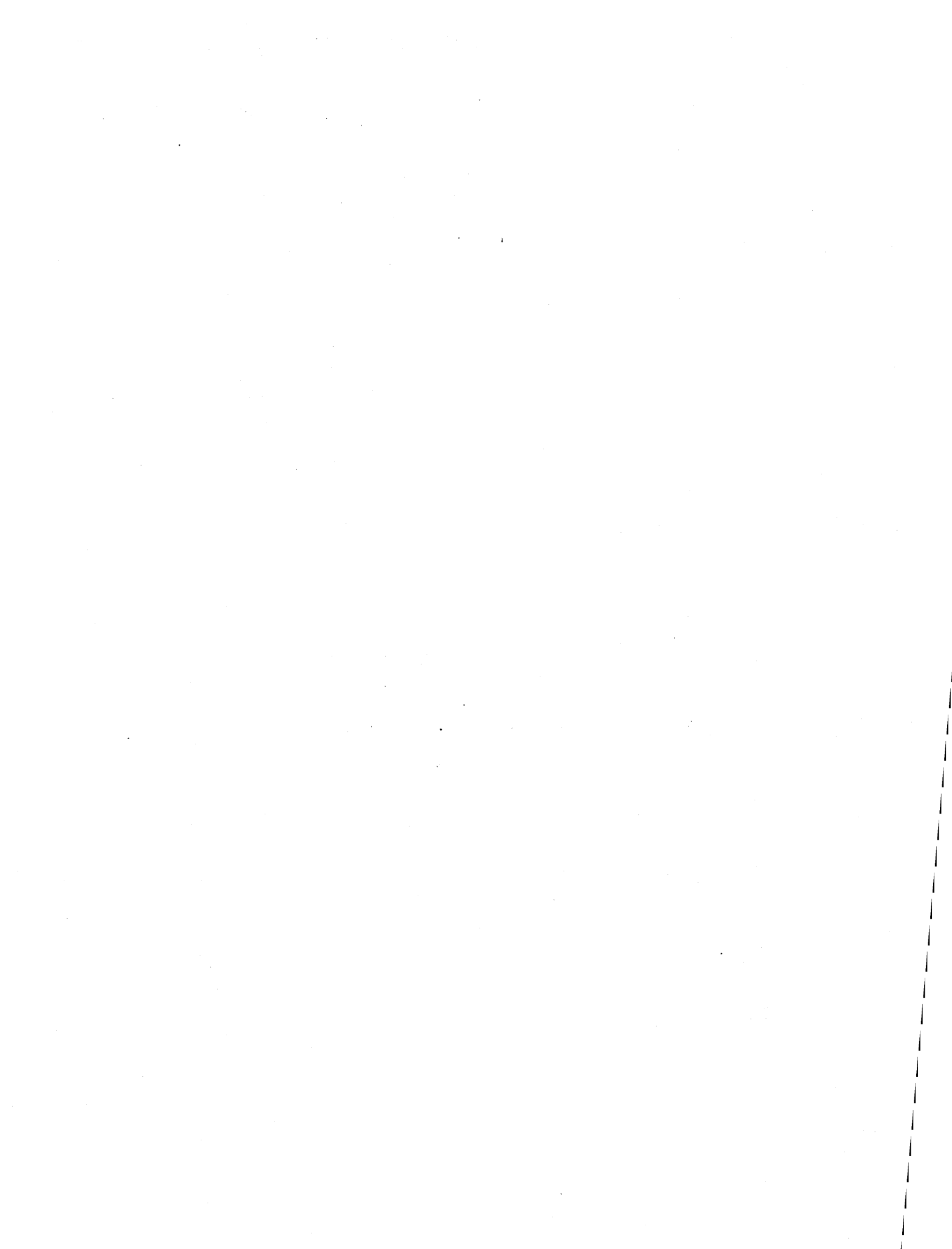
Respondents also discussed the difficulty or ease with which rural areas could implement Master Plan. In areas where special education was primarily developed by the county, the distribution of Master Plan monies may not be a problem. However, fiscal incentives may not exist for some areas to adopt Master Plan; for instance, some districts in rural areas receive a small school allowance, which they may lose under Master Plan.

Given the continued pressure on all levels of government to trim the public budgets, the need to make use of all possible resources to provide programs and services to special education students is critical. Therefore, a major focus of the 1980 evaluation will be to identify all available resources (both public and private) that might be used at the local or state level to provide comprehensive services to students and to determine the extent to which local areas are aware of these resources and the extent to which they take advantage of them.



Appendix B

QUESTIONNAIRES ADMINISTERED TO REGULAR CLASSROOM  
TEACHERS, RESOURCE SPECIALISTS,  
AND LDG TEACHERS



HOME SCHOOL(S): \_\_\_\_\_

SESR CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

REGULAR TEACHER  
MASTER PLAN EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How many identified special education students of each type are enrolled in your regular education classroom this year? Count each student only once, using their major disability. (Please fill in a 0 if you have no students in the category). In the left column, please write down the number of hours a week each student spends with the RS/LDG teacher.

Learning Handicapped

---

Hours a week per student

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Learning disabilities  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Behavior disorders  
\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Educationally retarded (EMR)

Communicatively Handicapped

---

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Deaf  
\_\_\_\_\_ 5. Deaf-blind  
\_\_\_\_\_ 6. Severely hard of hearing  
\_\_\_\_\_ 7. Severely language handicapped  
\_\_\_\_\_ 8. Language and speech handicapped

Physically Handicapped

---

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Blind  
\_\_\_\_\_ 10. Partially seeing  
\_\_\_\_\_ 11. Orthopedically handicapped  
\_\_\_\_\_ 12. Other health impaired

Severely Handicapped

---

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Developmentally handicapped  
\_\_\_\_\_ 14. Trainable mentally retarded  
\_\_\_\_\_ 15. Autistic  
\_\_\_\_\_ 16. Seriously emotionally disturbed

-----  
\_\_\_\_\_ Total Number of Students

2. In an average month, how much time do you spend with the RS or the LDG teacher talking about your special education students' academic, social, and personal needs? How much time do you spend talking about special education procedures such as referrals or legislation? (If you have more than one special education student, estimate the total time you spend talking with the RS about all of them.)

_____ minutes	on students academic,
_____ hours	social, or personal
	needs
_____ minutes	on special education
_____ hours	procedures

_____ I do not meet with the RS or the LDG teacher (Please go to Question 3)



Is this the right amount of time for you?

1. \_\_\_ Yes, it is about right.
2. \_\_\_ No, I need MORE time with the RS or the LDG teacher.
3. \_\_\_ No, I could use LESS time with the RS or the LDG teacher.

3. How valuable is the Resource Specialist or LDG teacher in the following areas?

	<u>Very Valuable</u>	<u>Somewhat Valuable</u>	<u>Not too Valuable</u>
a. Providing information on teaching techniques	1	2	3
b. Providing information on behavior management	1	2	3
c. Providing pull-out services for special education students	1	2	3
d. Assisting with referrals	1	2	3
e. Advice on contacting parents	1	2	3
f. Contacting parents for you	1	2	3
g. Assisting students with regular classroom assignments.	1	2	3
h. Other _____	1	2	3

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS COLUMN YET

4. This year, how often have you attended inservice training sessions or participated in staff development activities regarding any education topics?

Please check as many boxes as applicable.

Never

Once or twice, for less than 1-1/2 hours each session.

Three or more times, for less than 1-1/2 hours each session.

Once or twice, for 1-1/2 hours to 1 day.

Three or more times, for 1-1/2 hours to 1 day.

One or more extended sessions, for more than 1 day.

We are especially interested in the Resource Specialist or LDG teacher and in special education inservice training. We will cover those topics in our group discussion.

Thank you.





RESOURCE SPECIALIST  
MASTER PLAN EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

1. a. How many special education students of each type are you or your aide teaching this year? Count each student only once, using their major disability. (Put a zero in each category that you have no students in. If you don't remember exactly, please estimate.)

Learning Handicapped

	<u>You</u>	<u>Your Aide</u>
Learning disabilities	—	—
Behavior disorders	—	—
Educationally retarded (EMR)	—	—

Communicatively Handicapped

Deaf	—	—
Deaf-blind	—	—
Severely hard of hearing	—	—
Severely language handicapped	—	—
Language and speech handicapped	—	—

Physically Handicapped

Blind	—	—
Partially seeing	—	—
Orthopedically handicapped	—	—
Other health impaired	—	—

Severely Handicapped

Developmentally handicapped	—	—
Trainable mentally retarded	—	—
Autistic	—	—
Seriously emotionally disturbed	—	—

TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS	—	—
--------------------------	---	---

- b. Do you coordinate services for more students than those listed in Qa?    yes    No. If yes: about how many additional students do you coordinate services for?        Students

2. This question describes some special education activities in which you may be involved. The question is complex, but it is important to the study. Please answer it carefully - Thanks

a. Please check each of the following activities that you are involved in during the year:

1. \_\_\_ Direct instruction of students
2. \_\_\_ Advising and consulting with regular education teachers
3. \_\_\_ Providing inservice training to regular education teachers
4. \_\_\_ Consulting with parents
5. \_\_\_ Assessing students and writing IEPs
6. -- Attending SAT meetings
7. \_\_\_ Paperwork related to instruction (e.g. lesson planning and correcting papers)
8. \_\_\_ Paperwork related to administrative duties, the SAT meeting; processing referrals; and coordinating the identification, assessment, and annual review of students.

b. Looking at the above list again, please rank the 4 activities you spend the most time on during the year.

I spend the most time on number \_\_\_\_\_

I spend the second most time on number \_\_\_\_\_

I spend the third most time on number \_\_\_\_\_

I spend the fourth most time on number \_\_\_\_\_

c. Which of the above activities do you think would best utilize your skills?

I'd prefer to spend the most time on activity number \_\_\_\_\_

I'd prefer to spend the second most time on activity number \_\_\_\_\_

I'd prefer to spend the third most time on activity number \_\_\_\_\_

I'd prefer to spend the fourth most time on activity number \_\_\_\_\_

d. Which activities would you like to spend less time on than you presently do? (list item numbers here) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

e. Are there some activities that could be taken over by someone else or which someone else could assist you with?

<u>Activity Number</u>	<u>Who could do this (title)</u>	or	<u>Who could assist you (title)</u>
_____	_____		_____
_____	_____		_____
_____	_____		_____
_____	_____		_____

f. What suggestions do you have to make the job of a Resource Specialist more workable? Check as many as you would like.

I don't think the job should be changed.

Eliminate one or more activities. Which one(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

More clerical assistance

More professional assistance

Additional training. What kind? \_\_\_\_\_

Decrease the number of students I am responsible for

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

3. a. How many hours a week are you assigned (or expected) to instruct students? \_\_\_\_\_ hours a week.

b. On the average, how many hours a week do you actually spend instructing students? \_\_\_\_\_ hours a week.

c. Do you believe this is enough time, given the number and type of students that you have?  Yes  No

d. Do you see students individually or in small groups?

always individually  usually individually

always in groups  usually in groups

about half and half between groups and individually

individually in a group setting

- e. Are you assigned to more than 1 school or district? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_NO  
 IF YES: \_\_\_number of schools \_\_\_number of districts
- f. How much time do you spend traveling between schools or districts during an average week? \_\_\_hours per week.
- g. How many hours do you actually work during an average week? \_\_\_hours per week.
4. a. What is the approximate total enrollment at your school? \_\_\_students.
- b. How many Resource Specialists are assigned to your campus? \_\_\_Resource Specialist(s)
- c. How many Special Day Classes are on your campus? \_\_\_class(es)
5. a. Do you have an aide? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No
- b. If yes: How many hours a day on the average does the aide assist you?  
 \_\_\_ full day  
 \_\_\_ 3/4 day  
 \_\_\_ half day  
 \_\_\_ 1/4 day or less
- c. How does your aide help you? If your aide helps in more than one of these areas, write the approximate percent of times that he or she spends on each area.
1. \_\_\_% helping with instructing students
  2. \_\_\_% helping with clerical duties related to instruction, such as correcting papers or mimeographing worksheets.
  3. \_\_\_% helping with clerical duties related to your administrative duties such as processing referrals, paperwork for the SAT meeting, or coordinating the identification, assessment, and annual review of students.
- d. How would you prefer to use an aide? What kind of assistance would be most helpful to you?
- e. If you are not using an aide in the way you'd prefer, explain why:

6. Are there any other comments related to the role of the resource specialist that you would like to share with us?

IF YOU ARE AN ELEMENTARY TEACHER, THIS COMPLETES THE WRITTEN QUESTIONNAIRE.  
Thank you for your help.

IF YOU ARE A SECONDARY TEACHER, PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING SECTION:

7. a. Are there any problems you believe are unique to the secondary level in implementing the Resource Specialist Program?

IF YES, Explain

- b. Have you tried any particular local strategies in dealing with these problems?  Yes  No

IF YES: Explain

- c. Would a change in legislation or state guidelines help?  Yes  No

IF YES: Explain

- d. Would technical assistance from the state help?  Yes  No

IF YES: Explain what kinds of technical assistance:

If you live in a rural area please complete this section:

8. a. As part of a rural area, have you experienced any difficulties in implementing the RSP that urban/suburban areas might not experience?     Yes     No

IF YES, explain:

- b. If there are problems, how have you coped with them? Have you found any solutions or partial solutions?

- c. What could the state do to help you deal with these problems? Be as specific as possible.

Again, thank you for your help.

## MASTER PLAN EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

1. a. How many special education students of each type are you or your aide (if you have one) teaching this year? Count each student only once, using their major disability. (Put a zero in any category in which you have no students. If you don't remember exactly, please estimate.)

Learning Handicapped

	<u>You</u>	<u>Your Aide</u>
Learning disabilities	---	---
Behavior disorders	---	---
Educationally retarded (EMR)	---	---

Communicatively Handicapped

Deaf	---	---
Deaf-blind	---	---
Severely hard of hearing	---	---
Severely language handicapped	---	---
Language and speech handicapped	---	---

Physically Handicapped

Blind	---	---
Partially seeing	---	---
Orthopedically handicapped	---	---
Other health impaired	---	---

Severely Handicapped

Developmentally handicapped	---	---
Trainable mentally retarded	---	---
Autistic	---	---
Seriously emotionally disturbed	---	---

TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS	---	---
--------------------------	-----	-----

- b. Do you coordinate services for more students than those listed in Q1a?    yes    No. If yes: about how many additional students do you coordinate services for?        Students



2. This question describes some special education activities in which you may be involved. The question is complex, but it is important to the study. Please answer it carefully - Thanks

a. Please check each of the following activities that you are involved in during the year:

1. \_\_\_ Direct instruction of students
2. \_\_\_ Advising and consulting with regular education teachers
3. \_\_\_ Providing inservice training to regular education teachers
4. \_\_\_ Consulting with parents
5. \_\_\_ Assessing students and writing IEPs
6. -- Attending SAT meetings
7. \_\_\_ Paperwork related to instruction (e.g. lesson planning and correcting papers)
8. \_\_\_ Paperwork related to administrative duties, the SAT meeting; processing referrals; and coordinating the identification, assessment, and annual review of students.

b. Looking at the above list again, please rank the 4 activities you spend the most time on during the year.

I spend the most time on number \_\_\_\_\_

I spend the second most time on number \_\_\_\_\_

I spend the third most time on number \_\_\_\_\_

I spend the fourth most time on number \_\_\_\_\_

c. Which of the above activities do you think would best utilize your skills?

I'd prefer to spend the most time on activity number \_\_\_\_\_

I'd prefer to spend the second most time on activity number \_\_\_\_\_

I'd prefer to spend the third most time on activity number \_\_\_\_\_

I'd prefer to spend the fourth most time on activity number \_\_\_\_\_

d. Which activities would you like to spend less time on than you presently do? (list item numbers here) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

e. Are there some activities that could be taken over by someone else or which someone else could assist you with?

<u>Activity Number</u>	<u>Who could do this</u> (title)	or	<u>Who could assist you</u> (title)
_____	_____		_____
_____	_____		_____
_____	_____		_____
_____	_____		_____

f. What suggestions do you have to make the job of the LDG teacher more workable? Check as many as you would like.

I don't think the job should be changed.

Eliminate one or more activities. Which one(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

More clerical assistance

More professional assistance

Additional training. What kind? \_\_\_\_\_

Decrease the number of students I am responsible for

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

3. a. How many hours a week are you assigned (or expected) to instruct students?  
\_\_\_\_\_ hours a week.

b. On the average, how many hours a week do you actually spend instructing students? \_\_\_\_\_ hours a week.

c. Do you believe this is enough time, given the number and type of students that you have?  Yes  No

d. Do you see students individually or in small groups?

always individually  usually individually

always in groups  usually in groups

about half and half between groups and individually

individually in a group setting

- e. Are you assigned to more than 1 school or district?  Yes  NO  
 IF YES:  number of schools  number of districts
- f. How much time do you spend traveling between schools or districts during an average week?  hours per week.
- g. How many hours do you actually work during an average week?  hours per week.

4. a. What is the approximate total enrollment at your school?  students.
- b. How many LDG Teachers are assigned to your campus?  LDG teachers.
- c. How many Special Day Classes are on your campus?  class(es)

5. a. Do you have an aide?  Yes  No
- b. If yes: How many hours a day on the average does the aide assist you?  
 full day  
 3/4 day  
 half day  
 1/4 day or less

c. How does your aide help you? If your aide helps in more than one of these areas, write the approximate percent of times that he or she spends on each area.

1.  % helping with instructing students
2.  % helping with clerical duties related to instruction, such as correcting papers or mimeographing worksheets.
3.  % helping with clerical duties related to your administrative duties such as processing referrals, paperwork for the SAT meeting, or coordinating the identification, assessment, and annual review of students.

d. How would you prefer to use an aide? What kind of assistance would be most helpful to you?

e. If you are not using an aide in the way you'd prefer, explain why:

6. Are there any other comments related to the role of the LDG teacher that you would like to share with us?

IF YOU ARE AN ELEMENTARY TEACHER, THIS COMPLETES THE WRITTEN QUESTIONNAIRE.  
Thank you for your help.

IF YOU ARE A SECONDARY TEACHER, PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING SECTION:

7. a. Are there any problems you believe are unique to the secondary level in implementing the LDG Program?

IF YES, Explain

- b. Have you tried any particular local strategies in dealing with these problems?     Yes     No

IF YES: Explain

- c. Would a change in legislation or state guidelines help?     Yes     No

IF YES: Explain

- d. Would technical assistance from the state help?     Yes     No

IF YES: Explain what kinds of technical assistance:

If you live in a rural area please complete this section:

8. a. As part of a rural area, have you experienced any difficulties in implementing the LDG program that urban/suburban areas might not experience?  Yes  No

IF YES, explain:

- b. If there are problems, how have you coped with them? Have you found any solutions or partial solutions?

- c. What could the state do to help you deal with these problems? Be as specific as possible.

Again, thank you for your help.

