Evaluation of Services Provided to Students with Disabilities

Madison Public Schools, New Jersey
January 2015
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INTRODUCTION

Within the past decade, the education of students with disabilities has experienced interesting and noteworthy trends that are impacting districts' needs to re-examine services and practices for this population. Overall, special education enrollment is decreasing, yet there is a substantial increase in the identification of students with more significant disability conditions. There is also an increase in providing services in general education settings; educators sometimes struggle with how to prepare teachers and staff to schedule inclusive services. Schools are being judged on the success of every single student, including students with disabilities, who historically have been exempt from stringent standards of accountability and had limited access to enrolled grade level curriculum standards. Educating students with disabilities has shifted from a concentrated focus on deficits to achieving outcomes that result in academic success at each student’s enrolled grade level. Collaboration among stakeholders is viewed as a critical skill in an area previously characterized by a separate system. The requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and participation and performance in statewide assessments have caused schools to critically examine the delivery of instruction and supports for students with disabilities.

While the future of educational funding remains uncertain, high performance and efficient practices are essential. In keeping with their stated mission and vision, the Madison School District engaged this study to address the quality and impact of services provided to students with disabilities.

HISTORY AND PURPOSE

In December of 2014, Stetson & Associates, Inc. was commissioned to conduct an evaluation of the special education program to determine the quality and impact of services for students with disabilities in Madison Public Schools. The district provided specific requests concerning this evaluation, including an interest in the best practices for early identification, best practices regarding the “customer service” aspect of special education, typical classification rates and what they are, and how Madison Public Schools compares with other New Jersey school districts. The district also is interested in
understanding the best practices in maximizing efficiency for services, and providing quality services that are also cost effective.

The concerns of the Madison School District tend to mirror many of the issues raised in the recent Task Force Study published by the New Jersey School Boards Association in March, 2014 entitled: Special Education: A Service, Not a Place. The study acknowledges the continuing pressure special education places on local district budgets and the desire to, “develop strategies that will maintain quality services without negatively affecting resources for general education programming.” The Task Force report offered 20 recommendations that address early identification, focus on literacy, use of shared services, improved data collection, and changes in the state funding practices.

This special education program evaluation report was developed with the active participation and input of Madison Public Schools central office administrators, school administrators, teachers, support service providers, and parents of students with disabilities. Madison Public Schools is commended for taking positive steps to ensure effective and equitable practices in its programs and schools. By evaluating the special education program, the district has taken an impressive step toward excellence and continuous improvement for all students.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Several principles guided this review of special education services. First, students with disabilities should be viewed as general education students who require some level of additional support in order to be successful. Decisions regarding special education supports required by a student today will likely change several times during his/her school career.

Second, it is no longer possible, either philosophically or practically, to separate an evaluation of services for students with disabilities from a review of the quality of instructional services provided to all students. Special education services are support services, so it is necessary to examine the general education instructional delivery system for all students and the problem solving process for any student who experiences difficulty in school.

This report is based on a review of services for students with disabilities within the context of highly effective, research-based practices. While compliance issues may be discussed in this report, the evaluation process requested and provided did not include a folder review or other aspects of a traditional compliance review.

Finally, this report was guided by the conviction that equity in service delivery is a necessary precondition for excellence within a school district. It is not possible for
schools to attain recognition for excellence unless success is pursued and achieved by all students within the district.

**EVALUATION METHODS**

An evaluation of services provided to students with disabilities in Madison Public Schools required an examination of quantitative and qualitative data from a variety of sources. Stetson and Associates, Inc. selected eight basic methodologies, including:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Structured interviews and classroom observations on all Madison Public School campuses;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Structured Interviews with each member of the Board of Education;</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Structured interviews with key central office personnel;</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Focus group sessions for multiple stakeholders, including principals, supervisors, administrative assistants, general education teachers, special education teachers, teacher assistants, central office administrative assistants, school psychologists, and related services staff;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Focus group meetings with parents of students with disabilities;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>A review of district written information pertaining to students with disabilities;</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>A survey of faculty perceptions of the services provided to students with disabilities in Madison Public Schools;</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>A survey of parent perceptions of Madison Public Schools services for students with disabilities; and,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>A review of seven comparable district statistics pertaining to the enrollment of students with disabilities, performance on assessments, budget and financial information and compliance with federal mandates and state targets.</td>
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</table>

The data collection instruments are provided in Appendix A. The following is a brief description of the methodologies of the Madison Public Schools evaluation of services for students with disabilities.

**Structured Interviews with Members of the Board of Education.** The Stetson and Associates, Inc. consultant met individually with each Board of Education member for the purpose of gaining their perspective regarding services for students with disabilities. These one-hour sessions addressed concerns as members of the board and community, and their perceptions of what is needed to promote continuous improvement of services for students with disabilities within the Madison School District.

**Interviews with Key Central Office Personnel.** Gaining the perspective and perceptions from key leaders was a critical component of this study and contributed to information pertaining to the district's vision, the manner in which special education
services are organized and managed, and how leaders view the quality and impact of services. In addition to the initial conversations with the Superintendent and Business Officer, the lead evaluator conducted structured individual interviews with the Superintendent, Business Administrator, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Coordinator of Technology, Director of Special Services, and the Supervisor of Special Education. The following questions were asked:

1. What is your role in the district? How does this role interface with the responsibility to provide services to students with disabilities? In what ways do you directly collaborate with and/or support the department of special education?
2. As you consider services provided to Madison Public Schools students with disabilities, what aspects of these services are successful?
3. What aspects of these services do you believe need to be improved?

Classroom Observations and Principal Interviews. Visits were made to each school in the Madison School District and included structured observations in 30 classrooms, including 19 general education classrooms and 11 specialized classrooms. These visits occurred on December 5, 8, 9 and 10, 2014. During each visit, brief interviews with campus principals and key teaching personnel were completed, followed by the classroom observations.

Both special education classrooms and inclusive general education classrooms were visited, using a structured observation guide to document instructional practices and student and staffing numbers. These classroom visits provided the opportunity for evaluators to observe the range of students served and various aspects of instructional delivery from the teacher's perspective. The observations also provided the opportunity to view the staffing patterns and how staff is utilized to provide instruction and support services. The classroom observation tool, developed by Stetson and Associates, Inc. for use in Madison Public Schools and several other client districts, has been recognized in presentations at state and national levels. Refer to Appendix A for copies of the materials used to collect data from the campus visits.

Focus Groups. On December 2, 3 and 4, 2014, nine focus group sessions were conducted to solicit feedback from homogenous respondent groups in the Madison School District. Each session was approximately 90 minutes in duration and followed the same sequence. After an introduction of the focus group as a critical aspect of the evaluation process, the participants were requested to respond to two questions:

- What is working with regard to services for students with disabilities in Madison Public Schools?
- What is not working with regard to services for students with disabilities in Madison Public Schools?
The participants in these meetings generated responses that were later analyzed and quantified. Refer to Appendix B for responses from each focus group session. The list of focus group sessions is presented in Table 1.

### TABLE 1. FOCUS GROUPS BY CATEGORY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 3</td>
<td>Supervisors</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 3</td>
<td>Special Education Teacher Assistants</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 3</td>
<td>Special Education Teachers</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 3</td>
<td>General Education Teachers</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 3</td>
<td>Principals/Assistant Principals</td>
<td>5/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 4</td>
<td>School Psychologists, Social Worker, Behaviorist, Guidance and Nurse</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 4</td>
<td>Related Services (OT/PT/SLP and LDTC)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2</td>
<td>Central Office Administrative Assistants</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 4</td>
<td>Parents of Students with Disabilities (2 groups)</td>
<td>6/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Focus Group Participants</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>95</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Written Information.** Madison School District provided written and published information pertaining to the New Jersey state requirements regarding special education services. The district provided a link to a recent Task Force Study published by the New Jersey School Boards Association in March 2014 entitled: *Special Education: A Service, Not a Place.* Student enrollment data and information pertaining to staffing and locations of services for students with disabilities in Madison Public Schools was also provided. Additional data available through the New Jersey Department of Education was used for this report, including information from the Department of Education Office of Special Education website and User Friendly Budget Information available through the New Jersey Department of Education.

**Faculty Survey.** Thirty-six (36) items were developed collaboratively with Madison Public Schools and included in the faculty survey, disseminated in early December 2014, to all campus administrators, teachers, teacher assistants and support staff. Two hundred thirty-seven (237) of the total staff responded to the faculty survey: 104 general education teachers, 29 special teachers, 35 special education teachers, 11 administrators, 32 teacher assistants, 7 related services, 7 Child Study Team Members, 4 Reading Specialists, 6 counselors, and 2 nurses. When considered by level, 6 surveys were returned by Pre-School faculty, 102 from the elementary level, 51 from the junior school, 76 from the high school and 2 from district level. The return rate for total faculty is significantly high and represents a statistically significant sample.

The faculty survey was disseminated to Madison Public Schools staff through Stetson and Associates, Inc. and analyzed using robust statistical analysis process. The results of this
survey are reported throughout this document as an expansion of the critical issues addressed. Refer to Appendix C for the complete results of the faculty survey.

**Parent Survey.** An online survey (available in Spanish and English) was made available to all Madison Public Schools parents of children receiving special education services. A paper copy of the survey was also provided to the district. All surveys were returned to Stetson and Associates, Inc. for analysis. The district received responses from 70 parents of students with disabilities. This return rate represents 16.4% of the parents surveyed.

Parents were asked to respond to 14 statements related to their satisfaction with the quality of services provided to their child in Madison Public Schools, their participation in and perceptions of the IEP process, opinions of their relationship with the school, and the extent to which they feel supported by the principal and central office personnel. Refer to Appendix D for a summary of the parent survey results. These results will be referred to throughout this report as they expand our understanding of the issues presented.

**A Review of Comparable District Statistics.** The comparable district study highlights comparative data relative to enrollment, student performance, budget and financial resources, and compliance with federal and state targets relative to the special education population. The districts utilized for comparison were selected by Madison Public Schools and included seven districts of similar size within the same geographic areas. Refer to Appendix E to read the full comparison study.

**QUALITY STANDARDS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES**

This report uses quality standards for special education services as a framework and foundation. It recognizes the importance of compliance and financial responsibility as part of the quality standards. While both of these factors (compliance and financial responsibility) are of significant importance, this report is intended to view the services for students with disabilities through the lens of quality practices for students with disabilities that are universally accepted. These standards serve a guide in examining the issues specific to Madison Public Schools. Refer to Appendix E for a complete list of standards, questions evidence and actions that served as a foundation for this summary report.
Quality special education services are characterized by:

| STANDARD 1. | Services for students with disabilities that provide a full array of options that are equityitably distributed; |
| STANDARD 2. | High quality instruction for all learners, that reflects effective classroom management, research-based instructional strategies, high expectations, and improved student outcomes relative to the state curriculum standards; |
| STANDARD 3. | A philosophy of shared ownership, acceptance, shared responsibility and accountability for all learners including students with disabilities; |
| STANDARD 4. | Valued parent relationships with high levels of involvement, satisfaction and a strong sense of mutual respect and value; |
| STANDARD 5. | Full compliance with the local, state, and federal requirements relative to referral, identification, and the provision of services for students with disabilities and all stakeholders are informed, knowledgeable and understand the processes, procedures, and practices; |
| STANDARD 6. | Efficient effective and appropriate Human and Capital resources utilized in an manner to promote responsible staffing and responsible financial management; |
| STANDARD 7. | A high degree of collaboration between general and special educators at the central and campus level that promotes trusting relationships and student centered decision-making; and, |
| STANDARD 8. | Successful inclusion of students with disabilities that is a valued and recognized practice supported through professional development, student-centered decisions, staffing and scheduling to support a full array of services in the least restrictive environment. |

**ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT**

Following the examination of the information collected through interviews, focus groups, classroom observations, surveys and data provided by the district and state, the following themes emerged and serve as a foundation for this report. Each section will begin with a brief overview of best practices related and specific findings related to the theme. Information to support each finding will be discussed, followed by recommendations for continuous improvement.

» **THEME 1**
  Services for Students with Disabilities that Offer a Full Array of Options, Consistency and Promote Shared Responsibility for all Learners

» **THEME 2**
  Instructional Excellence for ALL Learners
THEME 3
Authentic Parent Relationships and Satisfaction with Services

THEME 4
Efficient, Effective and Appropriate Use of Capital and Human Resources

THEME 5
Clear, Consistent, and Responsive Administrative Support and a Climate of Mutual Respect and Trust

The support for a careful examination of the current status of services for students with disabilities and for a long-range plan for continuous improvement exists in Madison Public Schools. This support is evidenced by: the request for review of current practices; the active involvement of the Board of Education, education staff members who participated in meetings, interviews and/or observations, and the involvement of parents of students with disabilities across the district. Madison Public Schools intends for this report to provide a launching point for future efforts to improve services for students with disabilities, their families and the community.

A BRIEF SNAPSHOT OF MADISON PUBLIC SCHOOLS SERVICES

| Madison Public Schools enrollment of students with disabilities is approximately 411, or 16.25% of the total student population. |
| Total enrollment is above the state percentage (15.7%); Madison Public Schools has a higher percentage than all of the districts selected by the district for comparison. |
| Madison Public Schools current staffing data reflects very low student with a disability-to-staff ratio (2.6-3.5) at the elementary level, 5.5 at junior school and 10.2 at the high school. Student with a disability-to-teacher ratios are higher, with a range of 6.8-7.3 at the elementary level, 9.5 at the junior school and 18.1 at the high school. This does not reflect information of the 20 students with disabilities who are in out of district placements and the six students with disabilities who are in facilities due to settlement agreements. |
| Performance of Madison Public Schools students with disabilities on the state assessments in the areas of Language Arts Literacy (LAL) and Mathematics was below five of the seven comparable districts and did not meet the state target for students with disabilities. |
| Graduation rates for students with disabilities are higher than four of five comparison districts. |
Madison Public Schools meets and/or exceeds the compliance indicators in most areas, including graduation and dropout rates for students with disabilities, participation in state assessments, Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) for student's ages 6-21, and Early Childhood Transition. According to the New Jersey Department of Education, Madison Public Schools does not have outstanding noncompliance that has remained uncorrected for more than one calendar year. Madison Public Schools special education services have been recognized by the New Jersey Department of Education for its efforts to improve the performance of students with disabilities.
THEME 1

Services for Students with Disabilities that Offer a Full Array of Options, Consistency, and Promote Shared Responsibility for All Learners

A “full array” of service options for students with disabilities refers to the type and level of services available to students with disabilities that are individually determined and based on specific student needs. Often referred to as the Continuum of Services, the array of options include: (1) External supports, where supports are provided to the student with a disability prior to instruction; (2) In-class support, where services are provided within the general education setting; and, (3) Specialized supports, where services are delivered at another location for a specific part of the day by a special education teacher. While these options are general descriptors, the New Jersey Administrative code clearly specifies services along a continuum that includes general education classes with supplemental aids and services, including in-class resource. The Administrative Code also specifies alternative program options (in another location), such as resource programs, special classes within the school district, special education programs in another school district, or other approved entities such as homebound, hospital, and non-public school.

For these services to be of utmost quality, evidence to support each students’ curricular and support needs throughout the school day was carefully and systematically considered, using the enrolled grade level as a reference point. Various service options would then be implemented throughout the school day. The full array of options would be equitably distributed across all schools, class sizes and caseloads. Lastly, there would be a high level of satisfaction from all teachers, administrators, and parents relative to the quality of services.

Shared ownership, acceptance, and shared responsibility for all learners requires the district to have a common vision and vocabulary regarding services, and leaders to promote a sense of shared ownership and responsibility for all learners, including students with disabilities.

Evidence of this philosophy is reflected in: the degree to which students with disabilities are included in instructional and support activities and non-instructional activities; the degree to which special education department members are integrated into the district and school system; and, the extent to which special and general education teachers plan and collaborate with one another across all settings, including transitioning from one school to another.
**FINDINGS**

There are eight key findings related to this theme.

1. There is a very strong commitment and desire to provide quality services to Madison Public Schools students with disabilities, including a commitment to continuous progress regarding the provision of quality services. Evidence of this commitment was voiced by all stakeholders and viewed in multiple ways.

2. Highly qualified staff of teachers, teacher assistants and support personnel provides the services for students with disabilities.

3. The faculty at Madison Public Schools reports an overall high sense of shared responsibility for all learners, including students with disabilities, though this shared responsibility is more evident at the elementary level.

4. Madison Public Schools provides a continuum of services for students with disabilities, including external supports, in class supports and supports in specialized settings. However, decisions regarding the type and level of support(s) are based more on a model rather than individual need.

5. Madison Public Schools is below the state targets relative to the percentage of students with disabilities in out-of-district placements. While this is an accepted practice within New Jersey, the Madison School District has the potential and capacity to serve more students within the district at their home school or at a cluster site within the district.

6. The commitment of Madison Public Schools to Inclusive services is commendable, with a significantly high percentage of students with disabilities in general education settings 80 percent or more of the day. However, concerns/beliefs regarding the academic benefit and perceived harmful effects were raised.

7. The Madison School District has practices in place to support Early Intervention services for students who may be struggling academically, however, a formalized system that is consistently practiced across the district is not in place.
The following is an expansion of these findings, including supporting data and observations:

**CHART 1. SUMMARY OF TOTAL FACULTY AND PARENT SURVEY RESPONSES RELATED TO QUALITY SERVICES FULL ARRAY OF OPTIONS, CONSISTENCY AND SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL LEARNERS.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>% Agree</th>
<th>% Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F Q1. Our school provides quality services to students with disabilities.</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Q2. Students with disabilities are considered full members of our student body.</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Q3. The total faculty feels a strong sense of responsibility for all students, including students with disabilities.</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Q4. Special education services in our schools offer an array of options that are effective in supporting the success of students.</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Q5. Our school’s intervention process is effective in addressing the needs of students who are experiencing difficulty in school but who do not qualify to receive special education services.</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Q8. General education and special education teachers collaborate effectively to plan and deliver instruction for students with disabilities.</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Q24. Services for students with disabilities are consistent from one school to another.</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Q29. I think that children benefit socially when special education students and general education students learn in the same classroom.</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Q30. I think that students benefit academically when special education students and general education students learn in the same classroom.</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Q31. I do not think that the education of general education students suffers when special education students are educated in the same classroom.</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Commitment to Quality Services.** Madison Public Schools’ commitment to continuous improvement and quality services is clearly evident in conversations with members of the Board of Education, central and campus leaders, teachers, teacher assistants and support staff. Parents actively voiced the desire for quality services. Commissioning this review is one indicator of the district’s commitment, as well as published statements from the district regarding its mission and vision for all learners. Quality services are a priority in Madison Public Schools.

Of interest is the focus group analysis regarding what is working well revealed multiple positive comments regarding the quality of services. Some comments described specific services such as inclusion, the in-class support services and replacement classes, while other comments described satisfaction with the care and concern offered by schools and staff. Survey comments such as, “I truly believe everyone I have interacted with in this district wants to help all learners,” or, “Madison Public Schools works diligently to educate students with disabilities in their district within the general education setting, the district supports student needs and attempts to provide least restrictive environment for all students,” demonstrate the opinions of stakeholders regarding district commitment to quality.

Approximately 93% of faculty, including administrators, agreed with the faculty survey statement regarding quality services, yet, of concern is only 75.7% of parents were in agreement. When analyzed by level, there is higher parent satisfaction with quality at the elementary level, with 87% in agreement. Parent satisfaction with quality at the
secondary level was somewhat lower with percentages of 68% for high school and 69% by parents of students in the junior school.

**Staff Quality.** Educating students with disabilities is a complex and collaborative endeavor requiring staff that are not only exceptionally knowledgeable and skilled, but also exceptionally talented in communication and collaboration on behalf of students with disabilities. This combination of “art and heart” should result in positive results/outcomes and, productive and supportive relationships, between and among colleagues and parents.

A common theme when reviewing information from interviews, focus groups, and survey comments regarding the positive aspects of services for students with disabilities in Madison Public Schools was the quality of staff, especially teachers, teacher assistants and other support providers. Stakeholders noted professional competence, personal traits, and collaborative capabilities when describing the staff. Principals described the quality and expertise of the special education instructional staff as talented and exceptional. There are reportedly 50 to 100 candidates for each position and principals feel fortunate to have a selection process with many choices.

Supervisors cite the collaboration between general and special education teachers in the schools as working well, especially at the elementary and junior school level. Many positive statements were noted in the faculty survey analysis, such as, “I work with an amazing staff from top to bottom and we all work cohesively to reach our goals.” Special and general education teachers had high praise for the teacher assistants. They report that many are degreed, come in with prior knowledge, and “jump right in.” They also acknowledged the professionalism and dedication of all staff that services students with disabilities.

General and special education teachers, and teacher assistants, especially appreciate the help of the district’s related services and support staff, and acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of the occupational therapist, behaviorist, case managers, and learning consultants. General education teachers described in class support teachers as outstanding, and note that teacher assistants are “overqualified and underappreciated.” School psychologists also acknowledged collaboration among the child study team and related services professionals, and described the special education teachers as “fantastic.”

Parents also note staff quality as a positive feature and use multiple superlatives to describe the individuals who work with their child. The views of the parents relative to staff quality are discussed in detail in Theme Three of this report.
While the staff quality is considered exceptional in most cases, comments and survey results revealed a need and a strong interest in receiving more training, support, and improved collaboration between and among staff.

**CHART 3. FACULTY PERCEPTIONS REGARDING TEACHER AND TEACHER ASSISTANT STATUS & PROFICIENCY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>% Agree</th>
<th>% Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F Q26. General education teachers in our school are skilled in strategies for addressing the needs of diverse learners.</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Q27. Special education teachers are viewed as faculty members of equal status with their general education teachers.</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Q28. Special Education teacher assistants in our school are well trained and skilled in fulfilling their roles in providing instructional support.</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information from the faculty survey reveals a moderate level of agreement regarding the skill and status of instructional staff regarding students with disabilities. While a moderately high number of total faculty believe general education teachers are skilled in strategies for diverse learners, the level of agreement is higher at the elementary level where the percentage of faculty agreeing with the statement is 91.5%. Views are somewhat lower at the high school level where nearly 83% of faculty agree and at the junior school level where over 79% of faculty agree.

A significantly high percentage of faculty agree that special education teachers are viewed as faculty members of equal status. When viewed by position, general education teachers agree at a much higher level (96%) than special education teachers (85.7%). When viewed by level, 97% percent of elementary faculty agree, 93% of high school faculty agree, and 88% of junior school faculty agree with this statement.

While teacher assistants are highly regarded, their level of skill and training is viewed as an area of need. Over 82% of faculty agree they are well trained, while 17% of faculty do not agree. When viewed by level, 88% of elementary faculty agree, 76.6% of high school faculty agree and 80% of junior school faculty agree. When viewed by position, 74% of general education teachers, 86% of special education teachers, and 90% of teacher assistants agree.

**Shared Responsibility for Students with Disabilities.** One crucial characteristic of schools that are successful with a broad range of diverse students is shared responsibility for all learners. Sometimes described as a “strong sense of family” or “no excuses,” these
characteristics are well documented in research regarding effective schools. In the past decade, these characteristics are studied in every credible evaluation of quality services for students with disabilities. This is particularly important because the history of education is one of separation and segregation for students with disabilities.

In “exhaustive longitudinal studies of school success,” Newman and Wehlage (1995) concluded that successful schools share three characteristics:

1. A clear, shared purpose for all students’ learning;
2. Teachers engage in collaboration to achieve this purpose; and,
3. Teachers take collective responsibility for student learning.

Across all positions, 90.6% of faculty survey respondents indicated, “The total faculty feels a strong sense of responsibility for all students, including students with disabilities,” while only 9.4% disagreed. When viewed by levels, the percentage of faculty supporting shared responsibility is higher at the elementary level (96%), and lower at the secondary level, reported at 90% at the high school and 80% at the junior school.

Parent survey results indicate a somewhat high level of agreement regarding shared responsibility especially at the elementary level where over 91% of parents agreed with the statement. There was significantly lower level of agreement of parents of students who attend the junior school where 70% or parents agree, while only 64% of parents of students who attend the high school agree that the faculty members feel a strong sense of shared responsibility for all students.

Comments from focus groups and surveys revealed a wide range of remarks regarding shared responsibility. Positive remarks credited the school and staff for care and concern and working collaboratively with parents and each other. Negative remarks cited issues with respect, lack of or unwillingness to meet, and a sincere desire for full communication. There were several remarks regarding a need to better inform or train general education teachers regarding the impact of disability and how to work with students with disabilities.

**Continuum of Services.** Providing students with disabilities a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment is a well-known requirement of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) across Madison Public Schools. It is recognized that the district must ensure that a “continuum of alternative placements is available to meet the needs of children with disabilities for special education and related
services” (CFR 300.115 (b)). IDEA lists these placements as: instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction and instruction in hospitals and/or institutions. IDEA also has a strong preference that the student with a disability attends the same school he or she would attend if the student did not have a disability. Typically, this is their neighborhood school.

Current best practice and legislative regulations continue to support a continuum of placements for students with disabilities, with the strong expectation that every student must be viewed as a general education student and as a member of his or her enrolled grade level. The New Jersey Administrative Code (Title 6A, Chapter 14) specifically addresses the program options for placing, and lists them from least restrictive to most restrictive. The state describes multiple options for placement in the general education class with supplemental aids and services, options for multiple alternatives for students who cannot remain in the general education setting, such as supplementary aids and services, and options for extended school year services, as well as options for early childhood services.

Determining the precise level of support for each student with a disability presents a challenge for schools, as decisions must be individually determined. Best practice supports that student’s needs are analyzed throughout the school day (by subject/class) relative to his or her participation needs in the general curriculum (as designed, accommodated or modified). Next, the student’s curricular needs inform decisions regarding the support needed along a continuum of placements, beginning with external support in the general education setting, in-class support in general education, or specialized support in a special education setting. The continuum exists, however, the student’s membership in general education and special education is a service that may vary throughout the day. Decisions are student-centered, individualized, and much more focused on academic and behavioral success.

Madison Public Schools current special education delivery system has a very strong emphasis on inclusion of students with disabilities through supports offered in the general education classroom by teachers and/or teacher assistants. These services are described as in class support and in class resource. Madison also provides (pullout) resource classes and replacement classes for students at each school. Specialized classes/programs are also offered in cluster sites at the elementary level and include a program for students with autism, and a program entitled LLD. The district also provides a pre school program for students with disabilities. The junior school has in class supports, resource, replacement classes, and one LLD class. The high school provides resource, replacement and in class supports. There is a program entitled “Pathways” to address life skills and vocational needs of some students, however the services are provided through resource and replacement classes. Additionally the district provides
Extended Year Services (ESY) for certain students, and a number of students with disabilities receive their services in out of district placements.

At the elementary level students with disabilities are clustered by grade level, and in-class daily support is provided by a special education teacher in subject areas of reading, writing, and math, and by a teacher assistant during the other subject areas for the entire school day. At the junior school, many students with disabilities attend one resource (study skills) class daily for the purpose of monitoring and assisting them with their work from other classes. Also provided at the junior school are replacement classes and a specialized classroom called LLD.

At the high school, most students with disabilities are in general classrooms with in class support in the core content areas. Replacement classes are offered in English and Math.

The issue with this finding concerns not quality of these multiple services, but how decisions are made regarding the services, and the beliefs about the services. It appears that at the elementary level, in-class support is provided most of the school day for students who are in inclusive settings. The practice that elementary “inclusion” classes have a special education co teacher for the ELA and math blocks, and a teacher assistant for the other areas suggests decisions that were not made on an individual basis. The decision that most students at the junior school attend one study skills class each day taught by a special education teacher may not be appropriate unless the IEP of each student with a disability reflects this as a level of need. Other types of in class support such as 2-3 times per week, rather than 5 days or partial day support, was not observed nor is practiced.

**Out-of-District Placements.** Placing students with disabilities out-of-district, in public, private, and residential facilities is a widely accepted practice in New Jersey. The United States Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has cited the state for having the highest proportion of student with disabilities in separate settings that are public and private, in the nation. Yet according to the New Jersey School Boards Association Task Force report, out-of-district private placements increased by over 34%, and out-of-district public placements increased by nearly 27% since 2007. This increase and practice has raised concern of the New Jersey School Boards Association, and was a focus in their final task force report. According to this report, out-of-district placements and transportation continue to be the primary cost drivers for special education. Yet returning students to their home districts was described as a “complex, emotionally charged endeavor.” It recognized the variables of parent support, facility support, and appropriate programs and services designed by trained staff, as impacting district efforts to serve more students in the district or home school.

As revealed in a comparison of seven districts, (refer to Appendix E), the percentages of students with disabilities in out-of-district placements ranged from .5% to 1.5% of each
district’s total population. Madison Public Schools’ percentage was .5% and was equal to one other district and lower than six of the seven comparable districts. This information was based on the October 2014 Actual report in each district’s User Friendly Budget Summary.

The percentage of students with disabilities in out of district public day locations, of the total number of students with disabilities in each comparable district, ranged from 4.2% to 12%. Madison Public Schools’ percentage of 4.2% was lower than all of the comparable districts. The percentage of students with disabilities placed in residential settings ranged from 0 to .5%. Madison Public Schools percentage is .3%. Three of the seven comparable districts reported zero students in residential placements. When compared to the state percentages, 7.2% of New Jersey students with disabilities are placed in public/private out-of district placements, and .2% are in residential placements.

The percentages of students with disabilities in out-of-district settings are within state and comparable district ranges and Madison Public Schools is making efforts to monitor and consider returning some of the students to district services. The district’s recently established specialized programs are an example of successful transition from out-of-district to in-district support. With this past history of success, future successful efforts seem certainly feasible.

**Early Intervention Systems.** The number of students with disabilities in New Jersey exceeds the national percentage of students with disabilities. According to the New Jersey School Boards Association Task Force, the state is “over classifying students.” Most recent data from New Jersey DOE reflects a classification rate of 15.87%; the rate for Madison Public Schools is reported as slightly higher at 16.7%. Madison Public Schools’
classification rate is somewhat higher than all of the districts included in the comparable district study suggesting that the district may be over classifying students. While the state has not adopted a formal process of early intervention, it is viewed as a practice that will address over classification, and provide an alternative method for acquiring data to determine a student’s need for special education other than the discrepancy formula currently used.

Since the passage of IDEA, 2004 and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the concept of early intervention has become part of our educational lexicon. IDEA, 2004 specifically references a general education system of intervention that carefully tracks data and student responsiveness to research-based intervention strategies. The requirements under IDEA state an IEP committee may not place a student in special education due to a lack of educational opportunity, or lack of research-based instruction. A systematic intervention process would be a way to document educational opportunities and efforts. However, if there are significant reasons that a child is suspected of having a disability, the school must refer directly to special education in a timely manner. Many districts now have a fairly well developed process in which supplemental intervention is provided, and data considered, over a period of time. The process typically includes several tiers of intervention, and a timeline for moving students through the tiers, in which intervention should become more intensive. This multi tiered system is intended to be a fluid and ongoing process in which students move in and out of the intervention process as needed. Some students may be continually in the process because of a need for ongoing intervention. Special education referral, testing and placement are only one of the outcomes intended for the early intervention process.

In Madison schools there is a high interest in early interventions and schools are implementing practices to support this. These include literacy screenings, implementation of specialized reading instruction (Reading Recovery) using the Intervention and Referral Services (I & RS) to monitor student progress and suggest interventions. However a multi tiered system is not in place.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Reinforce the Madison Public Schools commitment to quality services and continuous progress for students with disabilities. Invite a stakeholder group to review the recommendations of this report and formulate a strategic plan of action to demonstrate this commitment to improved quality.

2. Formally acknowledge the quality care, concern, efforts and dedication of the staff, including administrators, teachers, teacher assistants and support providers on behalf of all children, especially children with disabilities.
3. Address any issues of shared responsibility and ownership by opening a dialogue, providing training to faculty. Send a clear message that shared responsibility for all learners is a non-negotiable. The evaluators can provide a list of resources and activities to the district to assist at the campus level. There are at least five activities that can be addressed in faculty professional development to promote shared ownership.

4. Support the adoption and/or refinement of an early intervention process. Work to ensure the intent of the process is understood as intervention support for any student in need, and not just a vehicle for moving toward special education referral. The process should include: identification of research based intervention materials available with the district; guidance on establishing a campus level Intervention team; development of data protocols to support monitoring; guidance on how to establish fidelity to interventions; and, suggested timelines and collaboration with special education staff that will lead to timely and appropriate referral for testing. It will also be helpful to identify a central office team that can provide ongoing training and support to campus administrators in the implementation of a systematic Early Intervention process. Special education’s role in this process should be consultative only.

5. Consider implementing an alternative decision-making process that determines the precise level and type of support a student will need in or out of the classroom throughout the day. This will address the current reliance on in class support model where students are supported daily at the elementary for full periods of the day.

6. Continue to monitor the students who are in out-of-district placements, and when appropriate, plan to return the students with pertinent supports. This will require a continued focused approach, working with parents, facility assessment, coordination with the out-of-district placement, training, and district/school coordination.
THEME 2

INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE FOR ALL LEARNERS

Quality instructional practice is the cornerstone of educational success. The educational systems in this country have been held to ever-increasing levels of accountability for student performance. Federal and state guidelines require some form of a consistent, objective process for determining student progress, and methods for clearly identifying procedures to redirect learning for struggling students, ensuring future success. One of the primary components for both initial success and targeted remediation is the identification, implementation, and evaluation of effective instructional practices designed to meet the needs of learners at all levels.

This theme addresses school climate, instructional planning, participation of students in the general curriculum, grouping practices, use of accommodations and modifications, and the range and quality of instructional materials. Other factors include the quality of instruction in special education classrooms, the use of curricular-aligned instructional materials, instructional technology, and the degree to which academic learning time is used effectively. Other quality practices included in this section include classroom management, and the use of positive behavior supports and interventions.

This section reflects the analysis of 30 structured observations in Madison Public Schools classrooms that occurred in December 2014. Faculty and parent survey comments regarding instructional practices, and views obtained from principals, and district leaders relative to instruction are also included. This chapter contains information from focus groups, a review of performance data, and conversations with district leaders.

FINDINGS

There are thirteen key findings related to Instructional Excellence.

1. The overall impression of the district, school and climate in Madison Public Schools is highly favorable. The Board of Education, schools, and classrooms are viewed as supportive of teaching, learning, and student success.

2. The overall impression of the quality of teachers and teacher assistants is also highly favorable. Teachers and teacher assistants seem knowledgeable, skilled and highly proficient.

3. The district is promoting a standard lesson-planning template, and this practice is viewed as highly promising, promoting a focus on instructional quality and addressing differentiation of instruction when appropriate.
4. While the participation of Madison Public Schools’ students with disabilities on state mandated assessments is within the New Jersey state targets, the present academic performance levels of the students is below the state proficiency targets, suggesting a need to more closely review instructional practices, and progress monitoring.

5. The general education classrooms were focused on teaching the Common Core Instructional Standards and preparation of students for the PARCC assessment. Teachers implement a variety of CCIS-focused, researched-based instructional strategies that promote engagement and student-learning success.

6. Classroom management and student behavior was addressed competently in all classrooms. Student behavior was appropriate to highly appropriate.

7. Instructional accommodations and curricular modifications are reportedly implemented across all grade levels and programs, teachers and teacher assistants seem knowledgeable of the different types of accommodations used for students with disabilities.

8. Curriculum and instructional material resources and supplies to support the instructional practices seemed more than adequate to rich.

9. Madison Public School’s commitment to the use of technology resources by teachers and students is impressive. Technology use and integration was widely viewed at every level.

10. All schools provide a high level of inclusion support in general education settings through collaborative teaching (two certified teachers and/or inclusion support by teacher assistants). These teams were viewed as highly engaged using multiple structures for delivery that promoted student success.

11. Collaborative planning between general and special education teachers is inconsistently practiced and may be negatively impacting the delivery of instructional services for some students. Though insufficient common planning time is a widely held concern across the country, inadequate planning time is not supported by best practice.

12. There is a high level of interest in providing early intervention, especially at the elementary level, however, a formalized multi-tiered system of supports is not in place and the current early intervention practices are not consistently implemented.

13. Specialized classrooms serving students with moderate to severe disabilities are richly staffed, and provide highly specialized instruction, behavior management and support for students placed in these settings.
**District, Campus, and Classroom Climate.** The Board of Education members, the central office leadership, and special education central office staff were extremely cordial, supportive and welcoming. These leaders voiced a commitment to quality services for students with disabilities. Principals were highly knowledgeable regarding services for students with disabilities offered on their campus. They too expressed a commitment to quality services and viewed their role as supporting teachers in this process. The Stetson consultant felt welcomed at each campus and was treated with kindness and respect by all staff encountered. All facilities and most classrooms offered an environment that celebrated education in a positive manner.

The consultant viewed enthusiastic teachers, positively acknowledging student efforts, and teacher-student rapport that was kind, respectful and highly supportive. Most classrooms were attractive, neat and organized for instructional focus. Student work was posted and celebrated, and teachers used multiple techniques to maintain student engagement. Most classrooms at the elementary and junior school level were arranged to support student flexible grouping, and positive student interaction.

The following charts illustrate faculty and parent responses regarding instructional excellence:
## Chart 4. Faculty Survey Responses Related to Instructional Excellence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>% Agree</th>
<th>% Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F Q5. Each student with disabilities participates in the general education curriculum.</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Q8. I am knowledgeable of the contents of each student’s IEP for which I am responsible.</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Q10. I use instructional accommodations for any student who needs them.</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Q12. I modify instruction for students with disabilities as specified in the IEP.</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Q14. I modify grades for students with disabilities as specified in their IEP</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Q15. Our school’s intervention process is effective in addressing the needs of students who are experiencing difficulty in school but who do not qualify to receive special education services.</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Q16. My school provides adequate resources (materials, technology, etc.) to enable me to meet the needs of diverse learners.</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Q18. General and special education teachers collaborate effectively to plan and deliver instruction for students with disabilities.</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Q26. General education teachers in our school are skilled in strategies for address the needs of diverse learners.</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Q28. Special education Teacher Assistants in our school are well trained and skilled in fulfilling their roles in providing instructional support.</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%
When the views of the parents regarding instructional excellence are compared with the perceptions of teachers there are a few notable differences. Over 99% of the teachers indicate they provide accommodations and modifications, while only 75.8% of parents agree. Over 88% of the faculty agree general education and special education teachers collaborate effectively and plan, while only 71% of parents agree with this statement. Over 86% of faculty agree they have the skills and experience to provide quality instruction, while only 78.8% of the parents agree.

**Lesson Design for Instruction.** A well-defined instructional planning process is essential to effective delivery of academic information. This includes quality well-written lesson plans that show evidence of the lesson cycle, evidence that plans are aligned to Common Core Instructional Standards and, in the case of students with disabilities, consider any adjustments as specified in the students' IEPs. There must be indicators that written lesson plans are actually followed when implementing instruction in the classroom.

The Madison Public Schools department of Curriculum has a lesson design template that meets the quality standards of lesson planning and is widely used throughout the district. Teachers provided written copies of their lesson plans that specifically addressed the curriculum standard, the outcome of the activities to be covered to teach the lesson, and the assessment to be used to measure mastery. It also included a provision for differentiating instruction. This lesson planning template and written lesson plans based on the template were viewed at each school. Additionally, the activities and strategies implemented during the classroom observations matched the lesson plan. Teachers seem to like the planning process, and seemed proud to show how they planned lessons.
Though the lesson design did not specify adjustments for students with disabilities, it did address differentiation of instruction. A suggestion to improve upon the current lesson design and planning process would be to add a segment regarding students with disabilities, to note any accommodations or modifications that are either built in to the lesson activities, or need to be added as specified by the students IEP. This would bring greater focus to ensuring that lessons are planned and delivered with the knowledge of each student's IEP in mind, and that accommodations and modifications are implemented.

**Student Performance.** School districts are required annually to provide information regarding the participation rate and performance level of students with disabilities on statewide assessments. The state department and the federal office of special education monitor this information. The following chart shows a comparison of the participation and performance of Madison Public Schools on formalized assessment with seven other area schools selected by the district.

| TABLE 2. SPECIAL EDUCATION PARTICIPATION AND PROFICIENCY RATES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| **PARTICIPATION IN REGULAR ASSESSMENTS** | **PROFICIENCY RATE** |
| LAL | Math | LAL | Math |
| State/LEA Target | 97.0% | 97.0% | 69.8% (Target) | 70.2% (Target) |
| Madison Public Schools | 95.9% | 95.9% | 62.8%* | 63.8* |
| Berkley Heights SD | 100% | 100% | 65.4% (Target) | 65.3% (Target) |
| | | | 51.1%* | 58.1% |
| SD of the Chathams | 99.7% | 99.7% | 73.7% (Target) | 78 (Target) |
| | | | 73.6% | 78.5% |
| Livingston Public Schools | 99% | 99.2% | 66.8% (Target) | 72.6% (Target) |
| | | | 65.5% | 69.3% |
| Milburn Township Schools | 99.2% | 99.5% | 71% (Target) | 77.9% (Target) |
| | | | 68.2% | 67.4%* |
| Mountain Lakes Public Schools | 100% | 100% | 74.6% (Target) | 80.7% (Target) |
| | | | 72.5% | 77.5% |
| New Providence SD | 100% | 100% | 70.6% (Target) | 80.8% (Target) |
| | | | 57.2%* | 72.5%* |
| Summit City Schools | 99% | 99% | 68.7% (Target) | 70.8% (Target) |
| | | | 64.0% | 57.6% |

Source: New Jersey DOE Local District Special Education Public Reports 2012-13

Performance of Madison Public Schools students with disabilities on the state assessments in the areas of LAL and mathematics was below five of the seven
comparable districts, and did not meet the state target for students with disabilities. Gaps in achievement when compared to the school overall targets were 27 and 26.4 points in the area of LAL and math, and gaps, when compared to the student with a disability targets, were 7 and 6.4 points. The district reports that the performance of students with disabilities on state assessments continues to improve. The district has been recognized for the improvement of students with disabilities.

**Instructional Strategies and Delivery.** Successfully teaching students with diverse learning needs can be best accomplished through an array of effective practices such as differentiated instruction, cooperative learning, peer supports, flexible grouping, activity-based learning, and multilevel instruction. Effective practice research recommends teachers use less lecture and textbook-driven/teacher-directed passive instruction, and more student-directed/teacher-facilitated active instruction. In Madison Public Schools, multiple strategies that promote the active participation and engagement of students were observed.

Review of data collected through observations in 30 Madison Public Schools’ classrooms revealed the widespread use of many of these practices. At pre-school and elementary classrooms, the consultant viewed rich instructional environments, and instructional delivery that included the use of different types of graphic organizers, KWL charts, and multiple teacher visual illustrations of processes. Many activities that followed the Writer's Workshop were also viewed. Students had writing journals and interactive notebooks, and there was evidence of attention to academic language and vocabulary development. Most classrooms utilized the RACES (Repeat, Answer, Cite Evidence, Explain, Summarize) strategy regarding research projects.

At the junior school the use of RACES strategy was also evident as was the use of project-based learning. Teachers tended to relate instruction to student interests, thus witnessed was a high level of student engagement. Many of the practices viewed at the elementary school were also evident, such as the use of graphic organizers, student journals, and strategies to reinforce vocabulary acquisition. Teachers seemed to have an understanding of differentiated instruction, and provided different activities to differentiate the delivery.

Instructional strategies at the high school noted the use of notebook/journals, and projects in the area of social studies and science. Also observed was lecture, teacher modeling, and whole-group instruction, followed by students working on packets prepared by the teacher.

**Positive Learning Environments and Classroom Management.** All classrooms used room arrangement in a manner that supported positive student interactions and behavior. Desks and other classroom furniture were arranged to encourage flexible grouping as well as preferential seating, especially at the elementary level and junior
school. High school classrooms tended to have students sitting in rows. Procedures and routines were clearly followed and sufficient storage and processes for student work completion was evident. At the elementary level, the classrooms seemed highly organized, with storage labeled, color coding, centers clearly defined and explicit "rules" for technology use, and other classroom procedures. Teachers also creatively assigned classroom responsibilities to all students, encouraging self-responsibility practices. At the junior school, classroom rules were posted and signed by students, while high school expectations were rarely viewed.

Student behavior was highly appropriate in all classrooms, and allowed for focused attention to instruction. A number of positive behavior support strategies were observed including: use of classroom schedules, and use of individual visual schedules in specialized classes. Teachers at the elementary and junior school levels used verbal cues to get students attention, and to focus and help with transitions from one activity to the next. Catchy, interactive phrases such as, "Macaroni cheese...everybody freeze," or, "Tootsie roll, lollipop, we were working now we stop," were heard in elementary classrooms. More age-appropriate cues, such as a countdown, were witnessed at the secondary level.

There was an excellent example of positive behavioral supports viewed in one elementary classroom. In this classroom, students were awarded small Velcro tokens attached to a card on their desk. When they collected 10 “tokens” they turned them for a ticket. Tickets could be later exchanged for tangible reinforcement. In the art class at an elementary school, the teacher reinforced whole class behavior by adding a small glass rock to a jar when student demonstrated defined behavior. A similar approach for reinforcing individual student behavior was also viewed where each student added pom-poms to their bucket, and when the bucket was full, they could return it for some type of reward. These means of explicitly acknowledging desired student behavior are considered best practice and will result in increasing positive behavior in the classroom.

Teachers used creative means for students to solicit help other than raising hands. They also used creative means to elicit student responses and check for understanding, such as drawing names from a jar, or having group leaders report out. A colored cup system was noted where students of student groups can indicate their level of understanding or progress in an assignment by placing a red, green, or yellow cup on the desk.

Highly specified student behavior management was observed in specialized settings. The use of Applied Behavior Analysis and Discrete Trial Training was observed being successfully implemented in several specialized classrooms.

**Accommodations and Modifications.** Instructional accommodations and curricular modifications are the paths through which instruction in general curriculum is made accessible to students with disabilities. Instructional accommodations provide support
for many learners with, and without a disability. Many teachers are either reluctant, or do not fully understand how to use them. This dilemma represents one of the great losses in forward progress for struggling students.

Accommodations are generally defined as a change made to the teaching or testing procedures in order to provide a student access to the information, and/or the opportunity to demonstrate her/his knowledge or skills. In other words, this is a change in HOW the student will learn or demonstrate learning. A modification is defined as a change in WHAT the student is expected to learn or demonstrate mastery. In contrast to accommodations, only the IEP team can determine the need for, and specific descriptors of curricular modifications. According to information from the US Department of Education, the most frequently used accommodations for students with disabilities are extended time, followed by shortened assignments or reduced quantity of work. However, there are countless other options for accommodating student learning.

Madison Public Schools faculty members report a high knowledge of the IEP for each child they teach. Over 94% of faculty survey respondents indicated they are knowledgeable about the IEP for each student they teach. They also report use of instructional accommodations and curricular modifications for students with disabilities at an exceptionally high rate of 99%. Approximately 82% of faculty responses indicate they modify grades when specified in the IEP. Madison Public Schools parents of students with disabilities perception, regarding the use of accommodations by teachers are somewhat less. Only 76% of parents agree with the parent survey statement concerning this topic. When viewed by level, 91% of parents of children in elementary schools agree that teachers accommodate instruction, 61% of parents of high school students agree and 73% of junior school parents agree.

It was difficult to specifically observe the degree to which teachers implemented accommodations and modifications, however, every teacher was able to describe the accommodations they implement and all seem to have a high level of knowledge regarding the needed accommodations for the students in their classroom. Many teachers “built in” accommodations in the lesson planning process. This included activities such as read aloud and paired reading for students who struggle with reading and small group work. Viewed in classrooms across the district was the use of highlighted materials, preferential seating, extended time, and the use of assistive technology such as electronic tablets, computers and calculators. Word banks were provided to some students, note-taking assistance, study guides and chapter notes were also observed in use for others. Some classrooms had amplification devices that accommodated student focus, while many others had adaptations in seating with the use of creative balance balls allowing students to move, yet remain in the assigned area. Also observed was the use of write-on boards, pencil grips, and cardboard dividers for individual focus. Modified work was evident in some classrooms, for example, in a science class, students with more significant disabilities were viewed working on an assignment aligned with the general
curriculum standard, yet a number of steps and activities had been reduced, and the outcome for these students was different than the classroom standard. This was a good example of multi-level instruction where students can participate in the same activity/topic for a curriculum standard, but may have a different learner outcome within that standard.

**Curriculum Resources.** Viewed in classrooms especially at the pre-school, elementary and junior school level, were ample instructional materials and supplies that supported instruction. These included materials for centers (puzzles, games, blocks, etc.) and materials for student participation, such as scissors, glue paper, color markers. Classrooms had libraries of leveled reading materials, tubs of manipulatives, instructional posters and teacher-made illustrations. Also viewed were notebooks, binders and journals used by students. The science classroom seemed fully equipped. Some high school classrooms seemed rather sterile, with blank walls and minimal materials noted, such as textbooks and worksheets, while others had rich displays of student created projects.

Approximately one in four faculty on the survey indicated disagreement regarding the provision of adequate resources and materials to enable them to meet the needs of diverse learners. However this level of disagreement was not supported in an analysis of classroom observation data, focus group remarks and in faculty survey remarks. Teacher assistants did not mention any concerns regarding material resources, and special education teachers noted they are given what is needed by special education central office. General education teachers noted the district does a good job at getting learning resources. There were several comments in the survey analysis indicating a desire for more technology resources such as tablets and iPads, and a need to identify alternative resources needed for students.

**Technology in the Classroom.** Wide use of technology resources was viewed and evident in all classrooms. Teachers routinely utilized the SMART board technology and integrated the use in the instructional delivery. Teachers also have a web page where lessons and information regarding the class is posted for students and parents to access. FM amplification systems were also routinely used. The district is in the process of supplying Chromebooks for use in all classrooms, with future plans for students in grades 6-12 to use at home. Additionally, the district provides training and professional development relative to technology resources, use and integration.

Viewed in classrooms was evidence of the use of technology by students. Teachers had simple rules for Chromebook usage posted, and other written posted information concerning use.

Some students with disabilities were also viewed using iPads. In specialized settings the iPad was used as part of a student’s behavior management intervention plan.
**Inclusive Practices and In-Class Support.** An ideal inclusion setting is characterized by a seamless system, partnership between the adults in the general education classroom, collaborative planning, and implementation of multiple structures of collaborative teaching delivery that include one teach-one assist, one teach-one observe, station teaching, parallel teaching, alternative teaching, and team teaching.

Of the 30 Madison Public Schools classrooms observed, 19 were general education classes, which provided instruction to both students with and without disabilities. In these 19 classrooms, 15 were staffed with two teachers, and 6 had teacher assistants also assigned. Six elementary and junior school classrooms had two teachers, plus one or more teacher assistants in the classroom. The reported numbers of students with disabilities in these general education settings ranged from 1 (art classroom) to 9 (HS chemistry), with most elementary classes having 4-5, 7 junior school classes and high school classes with disabilities had 8 at the time of the classroom observations.

The observer viewed multiple structures of collaborative instruction in these classrooms. Most used a team teaching approach where the two adults shared in direct instruction, often one clarifying what the other had said, or repeating and reminding students of directions. Teachers and assistants were also viewed working with small groups of students following direct instruction. On at least one occasion alternative teaching was viewed, where one teacher worked with a small group of students while the other teacher managed the remainder of the class.

All subgroups in the focus groups acknowledge Inclusion and in class support as a positive aspect of services for students with disabilities. Supervisors noted that collaborative teaching is improving, and special education teachers report they are accepted and welcomed in the general education setting. General education teachers described in-class support as great and wish they could have more; principals acknowledged a strong co-teaching model on the campus and have seen improvement over the past years.

**Collaborative Instructional Planning.** When considering how to provide access to the general education classroom and curriculum for students with disabilities, the lesson planning process is an essential component. Coordination between general and special educators is necessary when planning the delivery of instruction, with respect to following the general curriculum framework, and ensuring access and progress for students with disabilities. Assigning a special education teacher or paraprofessional to provide support within a general education classroom can provide an opportunity to increase the intensity of instructional support for all students, because in essence, the student-teacher ratio has been reduced in half. However, without collaborative planning regarding how the additional staff will be used, the benefits cannot be realized.
The faculty survey reveals that 97% of elementary faculty agrees general and special education teachers collaborate effectively to plan and deliver instruction, yet only 77% of high school faculty and 75.5% of junior school faculty agree. Only 71% of parents agree teacher’s work together to effectively plan and deliver instruction.

The elementary principals interviewed reported general and special education teachers do plan together regularly. Having sufficient common planning time is a universal concern, among districts across the country. Common planning time is considered best practice and an imperative for quality instruction and inclusion. The junior school has a TEAM model that is viewed as benefitting common planning. Teachers at the high school do not have common planning due to scheduling conflicts resulting in informal planning between teachers and teacher assistants. Both elementary and secondary principals echoed these sentiments in the focus group sessions.

Numerous responses to the faculty survey indicated a concern with the lack of opportunity for common planning between general and special educators, and suggestions that common planning time recommended for improving special education services. It is noted that respondents to the parent survey also indicated they did not believe their child’s general and special education teachers worked together to plan and deliver their child’s instructional program. Such recommended collaborative planning should be visible to all members of the child’s instructional team, including their parents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Acknowledge and highlight the excellent practices reported in this study. There were exceptional examples of teacher’s lesson design and planning.

2. Consider adjusting the district’s lesson-planning template to include attention to planning for students who have required accommodations.

3. Provide additional training and support in best practices for students with disabilities to emphasize best practices for all students, such as, flexible grouping.

4. Include special and general educators in training regarding collaborative planning and delivery of collaborative instruction. This should include models for collaboratively delivering instruction.

5. Provide general education content training and supportive material resources for special education staff to increase knowledge of the general curriculum.

6. Provide training for both general and special education teachers in the effective use of the district’s general education curriculum for a diverse population of students. Provide opportunities for general and special education teachers to practice and implement scaffolding.

7. Provide specific training and professional development for paraprofessionals to address role clarity.
provide a greater focus on progress monitoring for students with disabilities within the general curriculum framework, and a more targeted approach to progress monitoring using multiple means of assessments.

9. Establish a systematic process for providing professional development with follow-up technical support for all teachers and paraprofessionals based on the needs identified in this report. Provide training through formal and informal methods such as large groups.

The ultimate goal of instructional excellence for all learners is improved student outcomes. As measured by the state assessment system, the performance of Madison Public Schools students with disabilities was below the district total population performance and state targets in Mathematics and Language Arts. However, the district is continuing their efforts to improve the performance of students with disabilities and has been recognized by the state for their improvement efforts.

The relationship between the quality of instruction in both general and special education classrooms, including the quality of in-class support in inclusive settings, to improved student outcomes, is direct and foundational. Educators must accept that student performance can only improve when classroom instruction and support improves.
THEME 3

AUTHENTIC PARENT RELATIONSHIPS & SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES

One hallmark of a successful district is high stakeholder satisfaction, especially parent satisfaction. It is particularly important for districts to provide services that parents will value. Another indicator is the extent to which parents feel valued and supported regarding their efforts to ensure services for their child. Related to this value and support is the degree to which a district listens and responds to suggestions for improvement. A third concern is the extent to which parents are involved in the educational process, including decision-making and partnership in the IEP.

The findings regarding parent relationships in Madison Public Schools are based upon information obtained from interviews with the members of the Board of Education, interviews with district and campus leaders, information from parent and faculty survey analysis and information from focus group participants, including parents of students with disabilities. The evaluators feel confident in reporting the major themes and issues that were noted in the analysis of the information available.

In Madison Public Schools, most parents of students with disabilities are satisfied with services, involved with their child’s school and program, and feel valued and included in the various processes regarding their child’s services, however a sizable number are not, and the level of satisfaction varied between levels and schools.

FINDINGS

There are four broad findings related to Theme 3:

1. There is a high level of parental involvement in the IEP process and a high percentage of parents are knowledgeable about their child’s IEP. The IEP process is viewed as a positive experience by significantly fewer parents.

2. Parent perceptions regarding the degree to which they feel valued, respected, and supported varies significantly from faculty and school perceptions.

3. Parents have intense feelings regarding what is needed to improve services, notably in the areas of training for teachers, communication, and placement of students.
**Parent IEP Knowledge and Involvement.** The following graph represents parent knowledge and involvement regarding students with disabilities.

**CHART 6. MADISON PUBLIC SCHOOLS PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND KNOWLEDGE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>% Agree</th>
<th>% Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P Q4. I am knowledgeable of the contents of our child's IEP.</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Q5. I attended our child's most recent IEP meeting.</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Q7. Our experience in attending IEP meetings in Madison Public Schools has been positive.</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An impressive result revealed in the parent survey refers to the level of attendance at IEP meetings and level of knowledge of the content of the child’s IEP. Over 94% of parents indicated they are knowledgeable about their child’s IEP, and over 97% attended the IEP meeting for their child. This same level of knowledge was observed in the parent focus group meetings. Parents verbally described services, type and level of support provided to their children, noting positive aspects as well as areas of concern. Their comments reflected a high degree of knowledge of their particular child’s IEP.

Parents in focus groups and in survey comments mentioned improvement needed in the IEP process and in implementation of the IEP. Parents want greater input in the development of the IEP for their child and want to be viewed as a partner rather than a participant in the meeting. Parents’ other concerns regarding the IEP addressed the level of teacher, especially general education teacher knowledge of the child’s IEP. They suggested more training and monitoring of IEP implementation. Respect for their opinions, ensuring compliance and creating greater teacher awareness of the importance IEP, were the areas that were mentioned. Many parents provided specific information regarding their personal experiences, illustrating issues of respect, compliance and understanding relative to their child’s IEP.

**Parent Satisfaction With Quality.** The perceptions of parents of students with disabilities were captured in an online survey that was distributed to this key respondent group. The following bar graph shows the percentage of parents of students with disabilities who positively responded to four questions relative to their satisfaction with the quality of services.
**CHART 7. PARENT SATISFACTION WITH QUALITY OF SERVICES IN MADISON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>% Agree (%)</th>
<th>% Disagree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P Q1. Our child’s school provides adequate and quality personnel and services for students with disabilities.</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Q3. All faculty members we have talked with seem to feel a strong sense of responsibility for all students.</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Q6. Our child’s teachers accommodate and modify instruction as specified in the IEP.</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Q8. My child’s general and special education teachers work together to plan and deliver his/her educational program.</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall level of parent satisfaction with services indicates nearly one in four are not satisfied, however when viewed by level, elementary parents indicated a higher level of satisfaction (87.5%) than secondary school parents of students with disabilities. The percentages were 68.2% at the high school and 69.6% at the junior school. Interviews with board members and district leadership also indicated concern regarding the level of parental satisfaction, yet they were complimentary of the teachers and service providers.

Parent survey comments and focus group remarks tended to note the quality of the teachers and related services staff as a positive feature regarding services for students with disabilities. Staff members were described as committed, dedicated, responsive, exceptional, helpful, astute, personable, conscientious, hard working, caring, energetic, positive, and knowledgeable. Parents used many other superlatives to describe staff such as awesome, “the best,” wonderful, amazing and exceptional. Parents also expressed appreciation for the manner in which the teachers maintain contact with them regarding their child and provide feedback. Parents commented on the school climate as positive and used words such as nurturing, supportive, cordial and responsive to describe the school atmosphere. They appreciate that the schools are building self-esteem and encouraging a sense of belonging for their children.

Many comments from parents reflected satisfaction with the quality of some specific services provided to their child. Wilson Reading, Occupational Therapy and speech and language services were mentioned. They also acknowledged the provision of accommodations, specialized “replacement” classes, inclusion and integration and the provision of personal assistance as positive features.
Parents are not satisfied with transition services, extended year services, social integration and the rigor of instruction in some classrooms. They also expressed concerns with the timeliness for identification and assessments.

The survey revealed a much higher level of agreement among parents of students with disabilities in elementary school regarding faculty responsibility for all learners. Elementary parents indicated a 91.6% agreement, while high school parents noted an agreement level of 64%, and junior school reported 79.6% agreement. A similar level of differences was noted relative to the statement regarding teachers providing accommodations for students. Again, 91% of elementary parents agreed, while 61% of high school parents and 73.3% of junior school parents indicated agreement. Parents are concerned that teachers are not aware of the accommodations needed for their child and/or are not implementing the accommodations as prescribed by the IEP.

There was consistent agreement by elementary, junior and high school level of parents reporting a positive experience in the IEP meetings, with agreement ranging from 76%-79% and an overall agreement of 78%. While this is not exceptionally high, it is promising. Improvement in the IEP process was mentioned by parent comments and in focus groups.

**Faculty and Parent Value, Respect and Support.**

**CHART 8. FACULTY AND PARENTS PERCEPTION OF VALUE, SUPPORT AND RESPECT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>% Agree</th>
<th>% Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F Q20. Parents of students with disabilities are viewed as equal partners with Madison Public Schools in the education of students with disabilities</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Q21. Parents of students with disabilities are welcome members of the IEP team in our school.</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Q22. I would characterize the relationship between Madison Public Schools and parents of students with disabilities as positive</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The survey results reveal a very high number of faculty believe that parents are welcome and view them as valuable partners in the educational process. While this is commendable, the parents have a somewhat lower level of agreement. Approximately 81% of parents agree with the statement they are treated as full and equal partners.

A review of the parent comments noted many favorable remarks regarding the supportiveness of the school staff regarding their child especially the level of care, and concern and responsiveness of staff and the schools willingness to work with them on behalf of their child.

The parent survey reveals a high level of dissatisfaction with the support and respect provided by the school principal. When reviewed by level, the percentages were 72.8% in agreement at the elementary level, 60.1% in agreement at the high school level, and 71.5% in agreement at the junior school level. Parent survey and focus group comments, however did not specifically address concerns of principal support. Rather, there were many comments regarding a need for improved communication.

In focus group meetings with teachers, principals, and central office personnel, comments regarding parents were positive, noting good communication and frequent contact regarding progress and communication at the school level.

Approximately 80% of parents reported they feel supported by central office.

**Parent Views for Improving Quality of Services.** Parents of students with disabilities offered many solid suggestions regarding needs of the special education department relative to improving the quality of services. Focus group and survey comments revealed several areas that included improved communication, increasing awareness and training, IEP implementation, inclusive services and transition support. They also addressed extended services (ESY) and need for attention to socialization and peer supports.
Parents’ remarks regarding communication ranged from general statements concerning a need for “better” and “more” communication to specific suggestions. These include providing information in a timely manner about upcoming events, needing updates from case managers on a regular basis, a need for better communication between the general and special education teacher, more feedback from therapists and consistent scheduled feedback regarding students performance and behavior. There were several remarks regarding homework and communication, as well as remarks about needed communication for children who are in out-of-district placements. The district, however, recognized transition services as a priority and has implemented many practices to address transition and oust secondary planning such as work sampling, internship program and job coaching.

Parents suggested an overall need for more awareness training for the general education population relative to understanding, and sensitivity to and respect for students with disabilities. Some suggested specific awareness needs such as understanding students with attention deficit disorders, Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA), or addressing different learning styles and differences. They would like more training and awareness for teachers regarding the impact of each student's disability and how to reach and teach the child.

Focus group participants and parent survey respondents also identified transition support as an area for improvement. They noted a need for better support as students move from one level to another within the district. Parents seemed especially concerned regarding high school transition and post secondary planning. They are concerned about the opportunities available for students who may not be moving to a four-year college, and the limited option for vocational training for students with disabilities.

Parents suggested several ways the school district might improve the IEP process. They desire greater input in the development of the IEP for their child and want to be treated with respect prior to, during, and following IEP deliberations. They also want teachers to be fully aware of the IEP for each student they serve. Parents are concerned that IEPs are not consistently being followed, resulting in non-compliance. They desire closer monitoring of IEP implementation, specifically the degree to which accommodations are being implemented. They want to ensure that all teachers are aware of the student's IEP and fully implement the accommodations.

Additional and improved services were also mentioned as an area in need of improvement. Currently parents are concerned about the quality of summer services, the criteria for determining the need and the frequency and duration of the services. They also voiced concerns regarding the rigor of instruction, especially in some replacement classes. There were several comments regarding the identification process; some feel it takes too long. However, data concerning compliance of Madison Public Schools' timelines for assessment does not support this concern.
These are rich and meaningful suggestions and should support the districts efforts for continuous improvement.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

With these results, comments and suggestions as a backdrop, the following recommendations are intended to increase parent satisfaction and participation, and a more consumer friendly climate in the Madison School District.

1. Increase parent involvement and awareness by encouraging involvement in the review of this program evaluation and development of action steps to implement recommendations. Use the suggestions offered by parents in the focus groups and surveys as a means to address their needs.

2. Invite and involve parents in future professional development and other activities and information sessions that will result from the recommendations, especially those sessions that promote systems change.

3. Acknowledge positive findings regarding the level of parent knowledge, involvement and their appreciation of support and inclusion at the school level.

4. Employ other methods to gauge parent satisfaction. This includes a brief survey following each IEP meeting, a review of the number of parent contacts/complaints to administration by topic, and attendance rates at IEP and other functions.

5. Provide additional training to all IEP team members, especially in promoting a climate of mutual respect and partnerships with parents. The training should address the roles and responsibilities of members before, during and after the meeting.

6. Address the issue of student transition from one school to the next by scheduling transitioning meetings between sending and receiving schools, encouraging student and parent visits to the schools, and encouraging sending and receiving teachers to observe the student.

7. Provide training for parents and educators in:
   a. Serving as collaborative and effective IEP committee members;
   b. Teaming and cross-cultural communication skills; and,
   c. Trends and issues as they emerge.

8. Distribute information to parents regarding peer support programs and opportunities for social inclusion available through the district or school.
THEME 4
EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT AND APPROPRIATE USE OF HUMAN AND CAPITAL RESOURCES

Providing a free and appropriate public education for students with disabilities is a complex endeavor requiring a high degree of stakeholder collaboration, a high level of staff knowledge and skills, and the provision of multiple appropriate and necessary human and supplemental resources to meet the legal mandates and best practice for this group. It is also a costly endeavor. Thus, districts are challenged to ensure that responsible decisions regarding expenditures for special education services are made so that quality is not sacrificed and resources are sufficient, efficient and appropriate.

The state of New Jersey reports that since 2001, special education expenditures have increased faster than state funding and state funding, provides approximately 34% of the cost for students with disabilities. The remaining costs for special education are borne by local districts (54%) and federal funding (9%). Accountability and funding matters require assurances that the district is making the very best use of available resources while providing services to students with disabilities that are embedded in effective practices research.

One of the most complex challenges facing special education is the determination of staffing needs at campus and district levels. Unlike general education, special education staffing is not formula-driven. Students with disabilities receive a variety of services in a variety of ways from a variety of staff—all determined by IEP committees on a student-by-student basis. Special education is a service rather than a place; decision-making regarding the type and number of staff requires a process based on each student’s unique needs and the needs of the educators who teach them.

The type and level of support needed for each student requiring special education and related services must be determined on an individual student basis. The level of staffing necessary to meet these needs is often impacted by numerous variables. These variables include, but are not limited to:

- The commitment of teachers and administrators to shared ownership for all students;
- The presence of a consistent, objective process for determining staffing needs, from pre-school through high school, that results in appropriate and equitable staffing decisions across the system;
- The degree to which teachers use research-based instructional strategies that increase participation and access to the general education classroom;
The degree to which teachers have the knowledge, skills and confidence to teach students with diverse learning needs, including students with disabilities;

The degree to which general education and special education teachers have the skills and the will to work in cooperative arrangements such as co-teaching, in-class support facilitation and collaborative planning; and,

The ability and willingness of administrators to organize the delivery of services through innovative scheduling and staffing practices.

There are factors beyond sufficiency that impact students with disabilities. Efficiency, effectiveness and appropriateness of special education staffing also require special consideration. What may be considered an efficient use of staff may not be appropriate or even legal. This includes practices such as clustering students at one location for services or assigning students to a class or location that does not offer opportunities to interact with their non-disabled or age-appropriate peers.

There are nine findings relative to the sufficiency, efficiency, and appropriate use of staff in Madison Public Schools.

**FINDINGS**

1. Madison Public Schools is richly staffed with teachers and teacher assistants to deliver quality services to students with disabilities, especially at the elementary and junior school level. While there may be a need to adjust staffing numbers from campus-to-campus, the total number of allocated instructional staff appears to be more than adequate.

2. There is a strong reliance on the in-class support (ICS) model in Madison Public Schools to promote inclusion of students with disabilities in general education settings. This model provides daily support for inclusion. There are other models and processes that the district should consider, including a decision-making process to identify the precise level and type of support for each student, and will ensure proper support without sacrificing the quality of services for a student with a disability.

3. Though classrooms are adequately to richly supplied with material resources, there is misunderstanding and/or confusion regarding the procedures for acquiring adequate materials, supplies and resources for students with disabilities and the teachers who serve them, especially at the secondary level.
4. Special education teacher assistants are a significant facet of Madison Public Schools staffing approach; although praise is expressed at all levels regarding their assignment and performance, a need for more training, professional development and support for them is expressed as well.

5. Assigning a 1:1 teacher assistant is practiced in Madison Public Schools at the elementary and junior school level. While this practice is recognized in New Jersey DOE Administrative Code, the district should continue to monitor decisions regarding this level of intense support.

6. The practice of using teacher assistants as substitutes is viewed as inappropriate, disruptive to instruction, and may compromise the delivery of services specified in the child’s IEP. The district should monitor the extent to which this is practiced.

7. Common planning time for collaborative teaching partners and teacher assistants providing in-class supports is not provided on a district-wide basis. This results in limited use of the skills of the second certified teacher or second teacher assistant in the general education setting. Though a universal concern, there is need to improve common planning time for general and special education teachers.

8. Special education district leadership has a high interest in successfully returning students with disabilities who are in out-of-district placements. This is viewed as positive, yet the district understands that careful attention to effective strategies to return students that include careful coordination/transition with the out-of-district placement, coordination and support from parents, adequate and appropriate facility, quality programs and trained staff and administrative support at the campus and district level.

**Staff Sufficiency for Special Education.** Sufficiency of staff refers to the adequate number of individuals required to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for students with disabilities. To ensure all students with disabilities are provided FAPE in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), districts employ administrative staff, appraisal staff, related services and instructional professionals, and paraprofessionals for students requiring the following services: identification, evaluation/re-evaluation, IEP development, instructional services and related services.

A review of data regarding the student-teacher ratio and student-to-instructional staff for students with disabilities is noted in the following tables. Madison Public Schools student-teacher ratio for special education (excluding students classified as “speech only”) is 6.3 and the student-to-adult ratio is 3.5 when all special education instructional staff is considered.
A review of data regarding the class size and staff-to-student ratio in the 30 classrooms visited revealed a wide range of class sizes and staffing allocations. The following table reflects what was viewed by the consultant on the date of the classroom observation and may not be the actual enrollment in each class. Information regarding the number of students with disabilities in each classroom was reported by a teacher from the classroom at the time of each visit. Classrooms marked with an asterisk reflect special education pullout programs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>TOTAL ENROLLMENT</th>
<th>SWD</th>
<th>SE TEACHERS</th>
<th>SWD PER TEACHER</th>
<th>SE TEACHER ASSISTANTS/1:1</th>
<th>TOTAL SE STAFF</th>
<th>SWD PER SE STAFF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Avenue ES</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>8.5/1 (9.5)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kings Road ES</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>12/2 (14)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T J S ES</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>3/2 (5)</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPCD</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>28/5 (33)</td>
<td>52.1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior School</td>
<td>589</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>6/1 (7)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>837</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPH District</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
<td>99.7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Madison Public Schools Department of Special Education December 2014
The number of students with disabilities in general education classrooms is significantly less than the New Jersey standard of eight for elementary and ten for secondary. Elementary class sizes were viewed as typically lower than average with a range of 15 to 23 students, including students with disabilities. The class sizes for students with disabilities in specialized settings also were below the New Jersey requirements. This consulting firm has conducted scores of evaluations in school districts throughout the United States, and the staff to student ratios observed in Madison Public schools are possibly the lowest viewed of any district.
**Student-Centered Staffing and Scheduling Process.** Most districts in the country use a variety of methods for determining the number and type of staff required to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Some of the most typical approaches are:

- A **ratio or formula-driven approach** determines the number of staff required to meet the needs of students with disabilities on each campus. While adequate for making projections of numbers and cost, this method does not regard individual student needs and violates the spirit and letter of the law regarding individualized programming. As a result, some classrooms are staffed very richly, while others with the same number of students may find staffing insufficient. Overall, funds are not spent wisely and the system must deal with a poor match between support needed and support provided.

- A **severity-index system** determines the level of severity for students, typically by disability category or other mechanisms, and assigns a staffing level per severity index. This approach has the same pitfalls as the ratio or formula-drive approach, and again results in a less than precise staffing determination. Resources are unwisely allocated on the basis of inadequate assumptions, many student needs are unmet, and parents and teachers are frustrated.

Stetson and Associates, Inc. recommends that Madison Public Schools adopt an **objective, student-centered approach** to determine staffing for special education. The support needs of each student are individually considered; effective instructional and behavioral supports are considered before personal supports; and, staff is assigned for specific reasons to provide specific services. This process also precludes inequitable assignments of staff and other resources across the district that occurs in the absence of such a systematic approach.

Over a period of 25 years, many benefits of a student-centered staffing process have been reported, such as:

- Staffing decisions are precise and students are neither over-supported nor under-supported.
- Instructional quality is critical, as staffing is often increased as a means to compensate for poor instruction.
Common planning periods are more likely to occur when teachers are grouped by grade level or content area rather than assigned to address a large range of grade levels or all content areas for a specific disability category. This increases collaborative planning opportunities for teaching teams.

This approach meets the spirit and the letter of the law requiring individualized decision-making.

Equity concerns are eliminated as each student receives the support needed, thus staffing is not based on persuasion or other subjective means.

Parents are supportive of such an approach and are able to serve as more engaged partners in the decision-making process with educators.

Concerns over due process hearings and litigation are decreased as all parties recognize the objective, student-centered manner in which staffing is determined.

Teachers, related service personnel and paraprofessionals are flexible on the basis of student needs versus adult needs, available services or locations.

Students make more progress as their support needs are targeted and focused.

The process is described in Appendix F with example decision guides. Should Madison Public Schools decide to adopt such a process, the district may develop its own steps and materials or may use examples provided.

**In-Class Support.** Providing in-class support that promotes the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education settings is viewed as a quality service and practice in the Madison School District. The quality aspects of this service are described and addressed in Theme One of this report.
At the secondary level, focus group participants reported that students with disabilities may receive in-class support in core subjects but in-class support is not available in other classes.

By applying a student-centered approach to staffing, decisions are precisely based on each student's needs throughout the school day and students are neither over-supported nor under supported. It will also ensure the quantity and sufficiency of staff is promoted with an objective approach and not on subjective means.

**Material/Facility/Curriculum Resources.** The business of special education involves not only having adequate human resources to deliver the multiple services students need, but also ensuring appropriate facility and material resources to support the educational process.

The following chart reflect the views of the faculty relative to material resources:

**CHART 9. FACULTY PERCEPTIONS REGARDING MATERIALS RESOURCES AND PROCUREMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>% Agree</th>
<th>% Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F Q16. My school provides adequate resources (materials, technology, etc.) to enable me to meet the diverse needs of our students.</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Q17. I understand the process for which we procure materials needed to educate students with diverse needs in my school.</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
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The provision of instructional resources for teachers was addressed in Theme Two. Though a high percentage of faculty (25.8%) reported disagreement that their school provides adequate resources to enable them to meet the needs of diverse learners, this statement was not supported in an analysis of classroom observations and comments from teachers.

When compared by level, over 27% of high school teachers and over 60% of teachers from the junior school disagreed with the statement. An analysis of faculty comments noted only four remarks regarding material resources. Three expressed a need for more technology and specifically mentioned a desire for more iPads, while one mentioned improved access to technology. There was one general statement that noted, “Limited resources are provided for teachers who must deal with a very wide range of skills.” This warrants further review with secondary teachers relative to their perceptions of needed resources.
Related services report that sufficient or adequate space at some locations is not available for them to deliver therapy, perform assessments and have privacy with students.

While concerns regarding sufficient resources are important, misunderstandings and confusion regarding who or what department is responsible for providing the needed resources and how individuals are to request the resources are concerns. The survey reveals a significantly high percentage of faculty from the secondary schools (43% high school and 55% junior school) do not understand the process of obtaining materials needed to educate students with diverse needs. When viewed by position, nearly 40% of general education teachers and 28% of special education teachers did not agree with the statement. Clarification is desired regarding the responsibilities for budgeting, purchasing and delivering needed resources, especially at the secondary level.

**Teacher Assistants.** Special education teacher assistants portray a vital role in the Madison Public Schools staffing approach to serving students with disabilities. There is high level of respect and appreciation voiced at all levels regarding their assignment and performance. There is also an expressed need for more training, professional development and support. The faculty survey reveals that approximately 83% of faculty agrees with the statement that the teacher assistants are well trained and skilled in fulfilling their roles. A substantial percentage of faculty at the secondary level disagree with this statement. Over 23% of high school teachers and 20% of junior school teachers disagree. When viewed by position, approximately 25% of general education teachers disagree with this statement.

A review of faculty suggestions from the survey and focus groups revealed multiple comments suggesting that additional professional development is needed for this valuable group of individuals. Teacher assistants noted they need more professional development that is “geared to what we do and how we can be more effective.” They want more training in working with students who are aggressive and in specific practices such as Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA). General education teachers expressed a need for role clarity for teacher assistants. Teacher assistant support is a needed and valuable asset to the quality of services for students with disabilities if given role clarity, training based on the role, schedules/assignments based on student needs and supervision and support.

There is a growing pressure placed on districts across the United States by parents for a one-on-one assignment of a teacher assistant to assist a single student throughout the entire day. There is also a common belief that in order for a student with a more significant disability to be included in the general education classroom, a 1:1 teacher assistant is necessary. While it may be a critical need in rare cases, often this is not the best plan of action.
In this report, it is important to state that this practice is justified only on an individual student need basis and is actually detrimental to many students for a number of reasons. We recommend, instead, that Madison Public Schools use the objective process described above in collaboration with the child's parents to review each timeframe of the instructional day and determine if personal support is needed for each time period and who (or what type of personal support) would meet the student's need per class period.

If, in rare instances, the student actually does require personal support for the entire school day, this should be made available per the requirements of IDEA. If the use of instructional strategies, technology, instructional accommodations or curricular modifications meets the student's needs, this 1:1 level of personal support is not the most beneficial.

It is also suggested that the need for a student 1:1 teacher assistant should periodically be reviewed to determine if there are any inadvertent harmful effects and if there continues to be a need for this intense support. Observed in one Madison Public Schools classroom was a situation in which a teacher aide was assigned to two students because of significant behavior concerns. However in viewing the data collection sheets for the students, it was noted that the behavior objectives were met.

An excellent resource is an article written by Dr. Michael Giangreco, University of Vermont, titled, “Be Careful What You Wish For: Five Reasons to be Concerned About the Assignment of Individual Paraprofessionals” (2005). Dr. Giangreco's article should be shared with teachers, parents and teacher assistants.

**Common Planning Time.** Shared planning time for special education teachers with grade level or subject area general education teachers are inconsistently practiced, significantly limited or non-existent. The need for some degree of collaborative planning time cannot be overstated. It is virtually impossible for two teachers to be effective in jointly providing in-class supports (co-teaching or any other collaborative model) without some quality planning time available on a regular basis. This was a concern often noted during classroom observations when discussing challenges with the teachers or in faculty survey responses.
The provision of either a common planning period, which is not always possible, or at least a protected planning time on a periodic basis is the responsibility of each principal and is best accomplished during the master scheduling process. Almost every educational journal has featured articles on finding and increasing the amount and value of planning time for teachers who share instruction and responsibility for students. This need emerged in Madison Public Schools and should be addressed through professional development and resources for principals and central office personnel.

**Addressing Out of District Placements.** Special education district leadership has a high interest in successfully returning students with disabilities who are in out-of-district placements. This is viewed as positive, yet will require careful attention to effective strategies to return students, including careful coordination and transition with the out-of-district placement, coordination and support from parents, adequate and appropriate facility, quality programs and trained staff and administrative support at the campus and district level. Theme 1 of this report addresses out-of-district placements as a service for students with disabilities. It is raised in this chapter regarding efficient use of financial resources because these placements present a significant financial responsibility for the district, as well as prevents students with disabilities from attending school in their community with typical peers with an appropriate IEP to address their unique needs. The district is encouraged to continue to explore options to return more students with appropriate support and services.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Consider an alternative model for determining needed staff that is based on a decision-making process that determines the precise level and type of support a student will need through the school day. This will address the current reliance on in-class support models where students are supported on a daily basis for entire blocks or periods of time.

2. Training and support for the decision-making process for determining staffing and scheduling must be provided to each principal/campus administrator responsible for this process. It must involve special education leadership to support each school’s efforts. Training and technical support for Madison Public Schools principals and selected faculty members should be provided for consistent understanding of the process. Technical support should be offered each year for schools to assess student needs for personal assistance and create an initial schedule for special needs in advance of the master scheduling process. This will facilitate more opportunities for common and protected planning times.
3. Build campus skills to support the adoption of the new process and ensure that it is followed. The special education director will be able to step away from specific campus staffing decisions and serve as a resource to the process, and as a means of accountability, to ensure that the process is followed correctly.

4. Investigate further the concerns of secondary teachers regarding the availability of resources and materials to support diverse learners. Comments and suggestions did not reveal any specific information regarding this need.

5. Provide clear, consistent guidelines and/or clarification of the budget and materials allocation process and procedures for procurement, especially at the secondary level. Delineate the roles and responsibilities regarding requesting, purchasing and disseminating needed materials. Determine the responsibilities of campus leadership and the responsibilities of central special education leadership regarding materials and supplies.

6. Provide professional development and training to teacher assistants that will support greater role clarity, schedules that match needs of students, instructional strategies that support diverse students, and collaborative structures for in class support.

7. Address the issue of utilizing teacher aides as a substitute by eliminating this practice.

8. Apply the student-centered decision approach to analyzing the needs for a student with a disability to have a teacher assistant assigned 1:1. Provide guidance to schools regarding the inadvertent detrimental effects of this practice and reinforce the goal to diminish personal support over time as student skills, behavior and independence increase.

9. Continue to explore the possibilities of returning some students who are in out-of-district placements to appropriate placements and services in the district at a home school or cluster site. This will involve careful attention to parent involvement, assessment of facility capacity, student program needs, and staff competency and training needs as well as strong communication with the out-of-district school to ensure proper transitioning.
THEME 5
CLEAR, CONSISTENT AND RESPONSIVE ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AND A CLIMATE OF MUTUAL RESPECT AND TRUST

A climate of mutual respect and trust is a necessary condition for success within any organization. One of the most difficult challenges for school districts is the ability to provide and communicate clear and consistent information to multiple stakeholders, and provide consistent and responsive support to individuals responsible for implementing quality services. This includes not only having clear and consistent policies and guidelines, but also a means of providing the information, professional development and training to ensure proper implementation.

The complexity of the “business of school” has increased along with numbers of students and faculty, legal and regulatory guidelines, and changing accountability requirements. Educating children with disabilities adds another dimension that requires an understanding of the unique needs and requirements pertaining to this group as well as a highly collaborative approach to solutions. Central and campus leaders must be viewed as partners focused on a goal of meeting the needs of students and the staff who serve them. Authentic relationships based on mutual respect, trust and value are critical to the process. Consistent and responsive support from the Board of Education, the Central district leadership, the special services department that promotes a climate of mutual respect.

FINDINGS

There are five major findings regarding this theme:

1. Madison Public Schools Board of Education members are viewed as individuals who are genuinely concerned and committed to the districts efforts to provide quality services for all students including students with disabilities. They strongly desire positive relationships with parents, are committed to fiscally responsive practices, and encourage trusting and respectful relationships between and among leaders and staff that promotes communication and understanding.

2. Campus leaders and district faculty, especially at the elementary and high school levels, view district level central office leadership members as highly supportive.
3. The special services department leadership is viewed as highly supportive by campus leaders and district faculty, especially at the elementary and high school levels.

4. School-based leaders (principals) are viewed by faculty as supportive in their efforts to serve students with disabilities, yet a significant percentage of parents of students with disabilities do not view principals as supportive.

The following chart reveals information from the parent and faculty surveys relative to leadership support.

### CHART 10. FACULTY AND PARENT SURVEY RESPONSES RELATED TO LEADERSHIP SUPPORT

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<th>Q</th>
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<td>F Q34</td>
<td>95%</td>
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<td>F Q35</td>
<td>89%</td>
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<td>P Q11</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>32%</td>
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<td>P Q12</td>
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**Board of Education Interest and Concerns.** Interviews with each member of the Madison Public Schools Board of Education were helpful and very informative. It is clear from the information shared by each member that the Board is sincerely interested and committed to quality services for Madison Public School’s students with disabilities and to those who serve these students, including their parents.
Board members are concerned with the high costs of funding special education services in the district. They do not want to lessen or negatively impact the quality of services, but do want to ensure that decisions regarding costs associated with special education are responsible and result in better outcomes for all students, including students with disabilities.

The members desire better understanding and communication regarding the necessity for out-of-district placements for some students with disabilities. This practice, though widely accepted in the state of New Jersey, is significantly contributing to the increase in budget. Some members view private placements as needed while others wonder if the district needs to build more capacity to serve students who are in private placements.

Concern over litigation and settlements regarding services for a very few students with disabilities was another area expressed by board members. They desire more information and understanding of the reasons and efforts of the district’s special education services to resolve matters and prevent legal actions.

Board members feel very favorable about the quality of instructional staff, yet seem unclear about special education goals in the district.

**Central Leadership Support.** As revealed in the faculty survey, district faculty and support staff views support from central leadership favorably. The survey results reveal an overall level of agreement of over 86%. When viewed by level, the agreement is significantly higher at the elementary level (91%); the high school level is 89% and somewhat lower at the junior school (69%). When viewed by position, 85% of administrators, 100% of special education teachers, 80% of general education teachers and 97% of teacher assistants agree with the statement that they feel supported in their efforts to serve students with disabilities.

Nearly 80% of parents of students with disabilities acknowledged the favorable support of central leadership regarding their efforts to ensure a quality education for their child. When viewed by level the percentages range from 76% at the elementary level, 80% at the high school level and nearly 86% at the junior school level.

There were few specific comments from faculty surveys and focus groups regarding the support from central office relative to special education, rather comments reflected that
the district supports the needs of all students. Statements such as, “Every child has the opportunity to reach his or her highest learning potential in the Madison Public School District,” acknowledges the overall feeling of support.

There were no negative comments or suggestions for improving central leadership support in the survey comments from faculty.

**Business and Special Services Departments.** While there is a natural tension between business management and other departments, the relationship between the special services department and the business office is somewhat lacking trust, conflict resolution, and clarity of procedures.

**Special Services Support.** Campus leaders and district faculty view the special services department leadership as highly supportive, especially at the elementary and high school levels. The overall level of support noted in the survey was 89.2%. When viewed by level, nearly 93% of the elementary faculty and over 95% of the high school faculty view the special services leadership as supportive. Approximately 69% of junior school noted agreement with the statement regarding support. When viewed by position, 100% of the special education teachers, 97% of teacher assistants, and 80% of the general education teachers agreed. Seven of eight administrators responding to the survey agreed with the statement concerning special services leadership support.

There were several comments that positively acknowledged support provided by special services leadership. Administrators voiced appreciation, noting timely responsiveness to calls and requests. They view the relatively new supervisory position as very beneficial. General education teachers from the high school describe the leadership support as “phenomenal” and note that the leaders “listen and implement” and they also describe the department as “approachable.” Additional special education staff (psychologists and speech language pathologists) acknowledged the level of support and feel the leaders are a good resource. They appreciate the efforts of leadership in returning students from out-of-district placements and describe the leaders as flexible.

**School Based Leadership Support.** There is a very high level of agreement among faculty at the campus level regarding the level of support provided by the principal.
Overall agreement with this statement was 94%. When viewed by level, the agreement was 95% for elementary faculty, 97% for high school and 89% for junior school faculty. When viewed by position, general education teachers indicated a 93% level of agreement, special education teachers indicated 91% in agreement, teachers assistants noted a 97% level of agreement and child study team members indicate 100% agreement regarding principal support. These findings are impressive and are supported in interviews, observations, and comments from faculty and focus group participants.

Each principal interviewed seemed to have a keen knowledge of the students, services, and needs of faculty regarding special education services. They could describe the staff, the type and level of services provided by them seemed aware of their support needs. Principals view the special education staff as highly competent and seemed very pleased with the staff at their schools.

Teachers voiced satisfaction with principal support as did other focus group participants, and view principal leadership as a positive aspect of special education services.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>1. Establish a communication system between the special services department and the Board of Education that will provide brief but periodic updates regarding the status of special education services in the district. This includes information pertaining to enrollment, classification status, placement/services staffing and budget. This report/written summary should identify trends and highlight positive features of services, as well as any concerns or complaints that have been successfully resolved. Develop a simple template so that data can be added or changed and information and content will be consistent.</th>
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<td>2. Address the faculty need for more professional development and support by leadership relative to services for students with disabilities. This is viewed as a positive finding and teachers should be acknowledged for asking for help. Identify the areas of need as noted in Theme Two and other responses. Implement a blended approach of technical assistance, mini professional development, formal professional development (i.e. Inclusion and Co-teaching) and other job-embedded practices.</td>
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The evaluation of services for students with disabilities in Madison Public Schools represents an inquiry into the status of present services and the perceptions of multiple stakeholder groups. This report was developed with the active participation of the Madison Public Schools Board of Education, central office staff, special education leadership staff and all schools within the district. It also included numerous survey respondents and focus group participants. Stetson & Associates, Inc. greatly appreciates the assistance and candor of all involved in the process.

Madison Public Schools is to be commended for taking positive steps to ensure effective and equitable practices are in place in schools and across programs for students with disabilities. Throughout this report, we named positive practices that currently exist and recommended changes we believe will build upon the foundation already created.

REFERENCES


New Jersey School Boards Association, (2014) Special Education: A Service Not a Place A report of the NJBOA Special Education Task Force