



# **Evergreen Elementary School District**

## **Special Education Review**

July 24, 2007

Joel D. Montero  
Chief Executive Officer





**CSIS California School Information Services**

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July 24, 2007

Clif Black, Superintendent  
Evergreen Elementary School District  
3188 Quimby Road  
San Jose, CA 95148

Dear Superintendent Black,

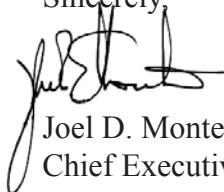
In April 2007, the Evergreen Elementary School District and the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) entered into a study agreement to provide a review of the district's special education programs and services. Specifically, the agreement asked FCMAT to perform the following:

1. Review the efficiency and effectiveness of the district's special education fiscal and program delivery system and provide recommendations for improvements, if applicable.
2. Review the district's policies, procedures, and assessment guidelines related to student study teams and the identification and placement of students into the special education program; re-entry of students back into regular education classes or available alternative programs; services for students with autism; and the IEP process; and provide recommendations for improvements for possible cost containment while continuing to provide appropriate services to students.
3. Review the district process on the hiring and length of assignment of one-on-one paraprofessionals and make recommendations for improvement, if applicable

The attached final report contains the study team's findings and recommendations.

We appreciate the opportunity to serve you and we extend our thanks to all the staff of the Evergreen Elementary School District.

Sincerely,



Joel D. Montero  
Chief Executive Officer

**FCMAT**

Joel D. Montero, Chief Executive Officer

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# Foreword

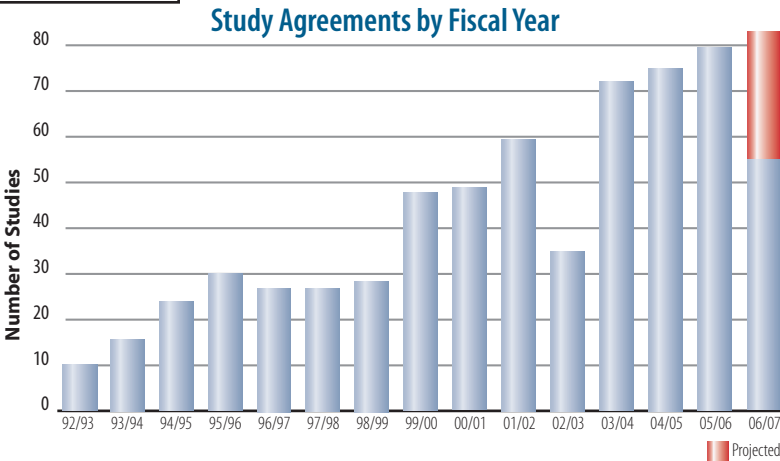
## FCMAT Background

The Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) was created by legislation in accordance with Assembly Bill 1200 in 1992 as a service to assist local educational agencies in complying with fiscal accountability standards.

AB 1200 was established from a need to ensure that local educational agencies throughout California were adequately prepared to meet and sustain their financial obligations. AB 1200 is also a statewide plan for county offices of education and school districts to work together on a local level to improve fiscal procedures and accountability standards. The legislation expanded the role of the county office in monitoring school districts under certain fiscal constraints to ensure these districts could meet their financial commitments on a multiyear basis. AB 2756 provides specific responsibilities to FCMAT with regard to districts that have received emergency state loans. These include comprehensive assessments in five major operational areas and periodic reports that identify the district’s progress on the improvement plans

Since 1992, FCMAT has been engaged to perform more than 600 reviews for local educational agencies, including school districts, county offices of education, charter schools and community colleges. Services range from fiscal crisis intervention to management review and assistance. FCMAT also provides professional development training. The Kern County Superintendent of Schools is the administrative agent for FCMAT. The agency is guided under the leadership of Joel D. Montero, Chief Executive Officer, with funding derived through appropriations in the state budget and a modest fee schedule for charges to requesting agencies.

<b>Total Number of Studies.....</b>	<b>637</b>
<b>Total Number of Districts in CA.....</b>	<b>982</b>
● Management Assistance.....	603 (94.66%)
● Fiscal Crisis/Emergency .....	34 (5.34%)
Note: Some districts had multiple studies.	
● Districts (7) that have received emergency loans from the state.	(Rev. 4/3/07)





# Introduction

## *Background*

The Evergreen Elementary School District is located in the southeastern portion of San Jose and serves 13,360 students in grades K-8 at 15 elementary schools and three middle schools.

In April 2007, the Evergreen Elementary School District and the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team entered into a study agreement for a review of the district's special education programs and services. Specifically, the agreement asked FCMAT to:

1. Review the efficiency and effectiveness of the district's special education fiscal and program delivery system and provide recommendations for improvements, if applicable.
2. Review the district's policies, procedures, and assessment guidelines related to student study teams and the identification and placement of students into the special education program; re-entry of students back into regular education classes or available alternative programs; services for students with autism; and the IEP process; and provide recommendations for improvements for possible cost containment while continuing to provide appropriate services to students.
3. Review the district process on the hiring and length of assignment of one-on-one paraprofessionals and make recommendations for improvement, if applicable.

## *Study Guidelines*

A FCMAT study team visited the district on May 8-11, 2007 to conduct interviews, collect data and review documents. This report is the result of those activities and is divided into the following sections:

- I. Executive Summary
- II. Fiscal Effectiveness
- III. Program Effectiveness
- IV. Student Assessment and Placement
- V. One-to-One Paraprofessionals

## *Study Team*

The FCMAT study team was comprised of the following individuals:

William Gillaspie, Ed.D.  
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FCMAT  
Bakersfield, CA

James Kennedy\*  
Fiscal/Policy Advisor  
Rural and Sparsely Populated Consortium  
Tehama County Office of Education  
Red Bluff, CA

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Special Education Consultant  
Auburn, CA

JoAnn Murphy, Retired  
Special Education Consultant  
Santee, CA

John Lotze  
Public Information Specialist  
FCMAT  
Bakersfield, CA

\* As a member of this study team, this consultant was not representing his employer but was working solely as an independent contractor for FCMAT.

## Executive Summary

A review of the district's maintenance of effort (MOE) documents filed with the California Department of Education (CDE) for fiscal years 2004-05 and 2005-06 and the projection for the current fiscal year indicates that the level of local support for special education has increased from \$4,302,326 to a projected level of \$5,281,233.

The general fund contribution to special education has increased from 42% to 52.5% of total special education expenditures. For purposes of comparison, the figure for the Southeast Consortium SELPA of Santa Clara County was 22.6% and the statewide average was 24%.

FCMAT found that most of the district's and SELPA's special education fiscal systems are effective and efficient. However, there are some areas which might be improved.

The SELPA passes through to the districts some of its funds for regional services and program specialists. These funds are intended to pay for the services specified in Education Code (EC) section 56836.23 and are restricted for that purpose in EC section 56836.25.

The SELPA has not provided sufficient guidance to districts regarding the use of these funds. FCMAT noted some confusion regarding the number of students who receive NPS/NPA services and the comparative costs. Because all such costs are expended as function code 1180, there is little to distinguish them. Use of a function sub-code to distinguish NPA and NPS costs might resolve this issue.

The district recently received a letter from the CDE indicating that the district has been identified as potentially disproportionate with regard to the composition of its student population receiving special education services. This finding is based on an annual review by CDE that measures the ethnic and racial proportionality in special education and disability categories; placements; and/or disciplinary actions, including incidents, duration and type.

Special education services are received by 8.7% of the district's students, which is well below the statewide average of 11.3% and suggests that the district is appropriately identifying students with disabilities.

The district's average special day class (SDC) enrollment is 13 students, which is below the average for California school districts. Specific contract language in the certificated bargaining agreement limits SDC class size and requires a \$5 per child, per day stipend for teachers when enrollment exceeds 15.

The districtwide average caseload for resource specialists (RSP) is 23 students, which is below the statutory caseload limit of 28. The district's average caseload for psychologists is 1,805 students, which is higher than the statewide elementary school average of 1,596 students. The district's average caseload for itinerant speech pathologists for grades K-8 is 54.5, while the average for preschool language is 32.5; both are within statutory guidelines.

The district's student study teams (SSTs) appear to be well-run, effective and useful to the teaching staff, which helps explain why the district is serving a relatively low percentage of its student population in special education.

The philosophy of the district is to transition students from special education as quickly as possible to make the re-entry process a successful learning experience. Students with disabilities are moved along the continuum of services and released from special education when services are no longer needed, resulting in a high rate of return to general education. This is another indicator of effective instructional programs.

The district's coaching program has been in place at all school sites for many years and contributes to students' successful re-entry into regular education.

The district makes full use of Section 504 plans and the SSTs to facilitate and monitor students' re-entry into general education programs.

The district does not currently operate alternative programs for students exiting special education and transitioning to general education. Some students require interventions and may need additional support in the general education classrooms.

At this time, the district's only option for students who require intensive services is to place students with NPS or NPA providers. Adequate development of any new programs and options within the district to meet any of these needs would take a minimum of six to eight months to establish.

It does not appear that the district has in place a computerized CASEMIS program; all CASEMIS data is input manually. As of May 11, 2007, the district had 403 IEPs that were not entered into the CASEMIS system, representing 35% of its 1,150 special education students. The district should consider forming a CASEMIS/IEP committee to develop and implement a computerized IEP process and reporting system and to discuss topics such as professional development, data collection and reporting, and equipment. The committee should develop an action plan and review it regularly, with copies provided to the superintendent.

Many of the district's principals chair IEP meetings and are knowledgeable about special education; however, they are not given the responsibility or authority to make financial commitments for the district.

# Findings and Recommendations

## *Fiscal Effectiveness*

The district is concerned about the increasing need for general fund contributions to special education. A review of the district’s maintenance of effort (MOE) documents filed with the California Department of Education (CDE) for fiscal years 2004-05 and 2005-06 and the projection for the current fiscal year indicates that the level of local support has increased from \$4,302,326 to a projected level of \$5,281,233, as detailed in Table 1.

**Table 1: General Fund Contributions to Special Education, 2003-04 through 2006-07.**

<b>FY</b>	<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>Combined State and Local Expenditures</b>	<b>Local Only Expenditures</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>	<b>Local per Special Ed Student</b>
03-04	n/a	\$7,654,530	n/a	n/a	n/a
04-05	\$10,246,286	\$6,580,070	\$4,302,326	41.99%	\$4,078
05-06	\$9,425,859	\$9,040,282	\$4,352,517	46.18%	\$4,030
06-07*	\$10,059,442	\$8,296,397	\$5,281,233	52.50%	\$4,890
*06-07 is budget, not actuals					
		Southeast Consortium 05-06		22.65%	
		Statwide Avg		24.01%	

The general fund contribution has increased from 42% to 52.5% of total special education expenditures. For purposes of comparison, the figure for the Southeast Consortium as a whole was 22.6% and the statewide average was 24%.

The most common assumption about the level of general fund support is that it results from over-identification of special education students; however, the district’s rate of identification is well below the state average.

Another common assumption is that more services are being provided than are necessary. While there may be some isolated areas in which services may appear to exceed the norm, the level of most services appears commensurate with the student population. School nurses provide special education services; however, while the cost of psychological services is transferred as a direct cost to special education, no such transfer of cost is made for health services.

Interviews with the district’s administrative, business staff and professional staff confirmed that the district’s employee salaries and benefits are notably higher than other districts in Santa Clara County. This is probably the single biggest factor contributing to the district’s unusually high level of general fund support to special education. As the level of state support is reduced as a result of lower COLA apportionments and other factors, increased levels of local support are required to maintain services.

The district has also incurred significant costs by providing special education services using nonpublic, nonsectarian schools and agencies (NPS/NPA). In some cases these services are provided because of a legal process such as fair hearings or court orders; in other cases they are provided as a result of a shortage of professional district staff, particularly speech therapists.

**Table 2: Nonpublic School (NPS) and Nonpublic Agency (NPA) Costs**

Fiscal Year	Total NPS/NPA
04-05	\$1,000,503
05-06	\$1,145,435
06-07*	\$1,220,000
*06-07 is budget, not actuals	

As indicated, the district has been spending more than a \$1 million per year for NPS/NPA services, which is more than 10% of the district's total special education costs. This is a very difficult area in which to find savings, particularly given the shortage of specialized district staff. The district's legal costs appear to be relatively low in comparison with other Bay Area districts.

The district has also incurred considerable costs for services provided by the Santa Clara County Office of Education. As shown in Table 3, the fiscal projections provided by the county office indicate that the district is paying more than \$3.4 million annually for these services, which is more than one third of the district's total special education expenditures.

**Table 3: Cost of Special Education Services Provided by the Santa Clara County Office of Education**

FY	Total Entitlement	COE Prop Tax*	Int Dist Transfer	Net State and Federal	Excess COE Costs**	Total COE Costs
05-06	\$7,518,604	\$(2,131,505)	\$(84,759)	\$5,302,340	\$(1,347,042)	\$(3,478,547)
06-07	\$7,832,076	\$(2,131,505)	\$(84,769)	\$5,615,802	\$(1,590,455)	\$(3,721,960)

\* County special education property taxes are distributed to districts within Santa Clara County to assist them in paying for the services provided by the COE.

\*\* This is the amount that the district has to pay over and above the property taxes made available for costs of services.

Because county office property tax funds are distributed based on a district's use of the county office programs, the allocation would decrease if the district provided these services, while the remaining state and federal entitlement would increase. Thus the district would have the resources and the ability to determine the best way to provide services to students who currently receive services from the county office.

However, given the district’s salary schedules and employee benefits, it is not likely that operating district programs to serve this population would result in any significant savings, unless savings can be realized as the result of reduced cost in other elements of the program.

The elements used to determine the cost of a special day class (SDC) include the following:

- Teachers’ salary and benefits
- Aides’ salaries and benefits
- Designated instruction and services (DIS) providers’ salaries and benefits
- Nurses’ salaries and benefits
- Psychologists’ salaries and benefits
- Facilities/utilities/maintenance
- Administration and supervision
- Other support staff costs
- Substitute costs
- Contracted services
- Other associated costs
- The county office indirect cost application

As Table 4 illustrates, there is very little difference between the district’s and the county office’s costs for SDC teachers and aides.

**Table 4: District and county office costs for special day class teachers and aides**

	COE Teacher/Aide per SDC		Evergreen Teacher/Aide per SDC		Difference
		FTE		FTE	
Tchr Salary and Benefits	\$99,612	1.000	\$102,084	1.000	\$2,472
Aide Salary and Benefits	\$75,112	1.376	\$68,704	1.376	\$(6,408)
Total Sal/Ben Tchr/Aide	\$174,724		\$170,788		\$(3,936)
Note: Figures are adjusted to reflect 1.16% increase for ESY					

Areas in which the district is most likely to realize savings and which therefore merit consideration include special education administration and supervision, other support staff costs and indirect support costs. Similarly, the special education local plan area (SELPA) as a whole may wish to perform an analysis to determine if one or more of its member

districts can reduce costs by operating some programs and services on a regional basis. If the SELPA districts' personnel costs are lower, greater savings may be possible.

FCMAT found that most of the district's and SELPA's special education fiscal systems are effective and efficient. However, there are some areas which might be improved.

The SELPA passes through to the districts some of its funds for regional services and program specialists. These funds are intended to pay for the services specified in Education Code (EC) section 56836.23 and are restricted for that purpose in EC section 56836.25. The SELPA has not provided sufficient guidance to districts regarding the use of these funds.

The district has charged its special education administration costs to these funds using standardized account code system (SACS) goal codes 5050 and 5060. Because these goal codes are for direct program costs, this is inappropriate. The total administrative costs would normally be expended under goal code 5001 for activities related to special education; however, this office also oversees pupil personnel services, the costs for which should not be accounted for using a 5000 goal code. The salaries and benefits for administrative positions should be appropriately charged within the budget.

FCMAT noted some confusion regarding the number of students who receive NPS/NPA services and the comparative costs. Because all such costs are expended as function code 1180, there is little to distinguish them. Use of a function sub-code to distinguish NPA and NPS costs might resolve this issue.

In addition, all of these NPA expenditures are charged as goal code 5751 which indicates services for students with severe and/or low-incidence disabilities. However, most of the students placed in NPAs are receiving speech/language services stemming from the lack of available speech therapists. This is a non-severe disability category and these expenditures should therefore be charged to goal code 5770.

**Recommendations**

*The district should:*

1. Continue exploring methods to reduce NPS and NPA costs. This should include assessing the feasibility of the district operating some programs.
2. Explore the possibility of either providing some special education services currently provided by the county office or working with the SELPA to develop and operate regional programs within the Southeast Consortium
3. Ensure that expenditures charged to goal codes 5050 and 5060 are for activities specified in EC Section 56836.23, and charge program administration and supervision to goal code 5001.
4. Consider using a function sub-code to better distinguish between NPS and NPA costs.
5. Take steps to ensure that expenditures made under goal codes 5750 and 5770 appropriately reflect the severity of the disability.
6. Ensure that expenditures which are not for special education, including administration and supervision, are not charged to a 5000 goal code.



## *Program Effectiveness*

A multifaceted approach was used to review the effectiveness of the district's special education program. Sources included 2005-06 pupil count data, key performance indicators outlined in CDE data reports, a review of class size and caseloads, and interviews with district and SELPA staff.

## *Enrollment*

The district's total student enrollment is 13,360, including 1,175 special education students, 125 of whom have severe disabilities such as autism and mental retardation and are served in county office-operated programs. Thus 8.7% of the district's students receive special education services, which is well below the statewide average of 11.3% and suggests that the district is appropriately identifying students with disabilities. The district recently received a letter from the CDE indicating that the district has been identified as potentially disproportionate with regard to the composition of its student population receiving special education services. This finding is based on an annual review by CDE which measures the ethnic and racial proportionality in special education and disability categories; placements; and/or disciplinary actions, including incidents, duration, and type. (20 United States Code sections (Title 20, United States Code, sections 1418 (a)(3)(C) and 1418 (d)(1)). The district is waiting for further clarification from CDE regarding its compliance with proportionality under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and any steps that may be required to correct deficiencies.

## *Recommendations*

*The district should*

1. Continue current practices in pre-referral interventions and establishing eligibility.
2. When clarification is received from the CDE regarding ethnic and racial proportionality in its special education program, review and revise policies and procedures as needed to ensure that it is in compliance with IDEA.

### Key Performance Indicators

Under the IDEA, the CDE is responsible for establishing statewide goals and indicators to measure progress toward these goals. Effective and efficient school districts will score in the third or fourth quartile on measures established by the California special education data report, including the following:

- Identification rates.
- Percentage of students with disabilities who score in the proficient range on both the math and English /language arts (ELA) component of STAR tests.
- The percentage of time students are educated in the least restrictive environment.
- The percentage of students released from special education and returned to general education.

It is important to note that all key performance indicators are measured against school districts of similar total enrollment.

The district is in the fourth quartile in the percentage of students with disabilities who scored proficient in both the math and English language arts portion on the STAR tests, indicating a high success rate. There is also evidence of newly adopted research-based curricula such as *Step Up to Writing* in the past year, which had a positive effect on instruction and student writing performance.

<b>Description of the Measure</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Score</b>
English language arts	2005-06	42.3%	Fourth quartile
Math	2005-06	28.7%	Fourth quartile

The district is in the third quartile in the percentage of time students with disabilities who are removed from the general education setting receive special education and related services. This indicates an increase over the previous year in the amount of instructional time in the least restrictive environment. The district has two primary special education placement options: special day class (SDC) and the resource specialist program (RSP).

<b>Description of the Measure</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Score</b>
Percent removed from the general education classroom 20% or less of the time	2004-05	61.4%	Third quartile
	2005-06	60.5%	Third quartile
Percent removed from the general education classroom 80% of the time or less	2004-05	17.6%	First quartile
	2005-06	19.6%	Third quartile

The district demonstrates continued strength in this area, and showed marked improvement in 2005-06 in the percentage of time students with disabilities were removed from the general education classroom 80% or less of the time.

<b>Description of the Measure</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Score</b>
Percentage of students with disabilities who return to general education	2005-06	10.1%	Fourth quartile

Students with disabilities are moved along the continuum of services and released from special education when services are no longer needed, resulting in a high rate of return to general education. This is another indicator of effective instructional programs.

### **Recommendations**

*The district should:*

1. Continue implementing research-based curricula such as *Step Up to Writing*.
2. Consider expanding the range of options for students with disabilities to include collaborative classes or learning center models to increase the amount of time students spend in the general education setting.
3. Continue the existing effective practice of assessing students, exiting them from special education and placing them in full time general education classes as appropriate.

### *Class size and caseload distribution*

FCMAT interviewed district staff and reviewed the district's class size and caseload distribution to determine how resources are used to provide special education and related services. In addition, FCMAT reviewed current job descriptions for the positions of Director of Pupil Services and the Coordinator of Pupil Services.

#### **Special Day Class Enrollment**

The California education code provides no cap on enrollment in special day classes (SDC). The district's average SDC enrollment is 13 students, which is well below the average for California school districts. Interviews indicated that the middle school programs have 10-11 students per class, which is not efficient for SDC classes at this grade level. However, the district plans to adjust class sizes to maintain 13-15 students per class districtwide. Specific contract language in the certificated bargaining agreement limits SDC class size and requires a \$5 per child, per day stipend for teachers when enrollment exceeds 15. This could have a fiscal effect on the district and may provide some incentive for teachers to retain students in a more restrictive setting.

The districtwide average caseload for RSP is 23 students, which is below the statutory caseload limit of 28.

#### **School Psychologists**

The district's average caseload for psychologists is 1,805 students, which is higher than the statewide elementary school average of 1,596 students. In addition to evaluating students for special education eligibility, the district's psychologists serve as administrative designees at IEP meetings, provide 504 coordination and case management, and participate in student study teams.

#### **Adapted Physical Education (APE)**

Federal and state statutes do not specify an average caseload for APE teachers; however, the CDE provides advisory information on caseloads for these classes. A statewide survey of APE programs found that the median caseload was 50 students. The district's average caseload is 27.

#### **Occupational Therapists (OT)**

The district's average caseload for occupational therapists is 28 pupils per therapist, which is well below the normal caseload of 55 or more. The district does not use certified occupational therapy assistants (COTAs).

District staff cited the location of school sites as the reason for low APE and OT caseloads. Low caseloads can result in an unnecessarily high level of staffing and thus greater costs.

#### **Nursing Services**

The district's nursing services are arranged on a consultation basis, with two resource nurses supporting unlicensed personnel who are trained in first aid and CPR and assigned

to each school site. The resource nurse provides school sites with direction and support for health issues. The credentialed school nurse develops specialized health care plans for students and provides training to unlicensed staff. This practice is consistent with standard practice in California, and the level of staffing is appropriate.

### **Speech Pathologists**

The district's average caseload for itinerant speech pathologists for grades K-8 is 54.5, while the average for preschool language is 32.5; both are within statutory guidelines. Specific contract language in the collective bargaining agreement states that speech and language caseloads are not to exceed a districtwide average of 55 students. In addition to case management and student services, preschool speech pathologists also serve on a districtwide assessment team to meet the district's child find responsibilities as children reach age three.

### **Recommendations**

*The district should:*

1. Maintain current staffing patterns for RSP, SDC and other related services such as speech and language.
2. Consider reducing staffing by one full time equivalent (FTE) APE teacher and one FTE occupational therapist to reduce costs.
3. Consider adding one FTE psychologist position to bring caseloads within the average range for California school districts.
4. Maintain current staffing patterns in health services.

### *Administrative Staffing in Special Education/Pupil Services*

The job description for the district's position of Director of Pupil Services has not been updated since 1987. FCMAT relied on staff interviews to identify the duties for this position.

The director of pupil services has primary responsibility for the planning, development, operation and evaluation of programs and services for students with disabilities. In addition, the position is responsible for supervising all areas of pupil personnel such as attendance, expulsion, counseling programs, psychological services, health services, home and hospital services, special education and related transportation services. Other responsibilities include preschool program oversight; crisis intervention/emergency procedures; Section 504 coordination; Medi-Cal and Medi-Cal Administrative Activities (MAA) reimbursement programs; child welfare and attendance services; collaborating with the district office on inter-district transfer agreements for students receiving special education services; and the school attendance review board (SARB). The director also has a major role in resolving due process issues in special education and is called into problematic IEP meetings at the school sites at least once a week.

The district's job description for the position of Coordinator of Pupil Services has not been updated since 1999, and FCMAT also relied on staff interviews to identify the duties for this position. Although the coordinator position is listed as specific to pupil services, in practice this administrator also has a primary role in special education. The delineation of duties between this position and that of the director is not clear; there appear to be overlapping responsibilities such as coordination for SARB, home/hospital program oversight and the development of policies and procedures. Additional responsibilities include planning and facilitating the districtwide earthquake drill and other emergency plans; ensuring timely placement in district, county office or NPA/NPS providers; preparation and maintenance of narrative and statistical reports for special education programs; and maintenance of student records. This administrator is also called into problematic IEP meetings at the school sites weekly.

These two administrative positions are supported by 1.5 FTE clerical support staff. This office appears to be staffed at a sufficient level.

### **Recommendations**

*The district should:*

1. Update job titles and descriptions for the position of Director of Pupil Services and the position of Coordinator of Pupil Services.
2. Streamline job responsibilities to increase efficiency and avoid unnecessary overlap and duplication of responsibilities.

### ***Nonpublic Schools***

The district allocated \$1.2 million for NPS and NPA services in the 2005-06 budget. Seven students are served in NPS/NPA settings at an annual cost of \$60,000 to \$100,000 per student. These costs include both tuition and transportation, both of which are provided by the NPSs/NPAs. At this time, the district's only option for students who require intensive services is to place students with NPS or NPA providers. Adequate development of any new programs and options within the district to meet any of these needs would take a minimum of six to eight months.

### ***Recommendations***

*The district should:*

1. Consider expanding the range of options available in the district to reduce reliance on costly NPS/NPA placements. Any new options would need to be phased in over time.



## *Student Assessment and Placement*

### *Student Study Teams*

The district's student study teams (SSTs) appear to be well-run, effective, and useful to the teaching staff, which helps explain why the district is serving a relatively low percentage of its student population in special education. The SSTs appear to reflect the original intent of such teams as envisioned by Dr. James Chalfant when he developed the concept of teacher assistance teams. The district's practice of providing teacher coaching opportunities before students are referred to the SST also appears to help.

### *Recommendations*

*The district should:*

1. Continue current SST practices and provide continual monitoring to ensure that all teams continue to operate effectively.

### *Re-entry of Students into Regular Education*

During the past two years, the district has implemented research-based educational strategies and instruction for all students. One of the programs in place is differentiated instruction, which addresses the diverse learning needs of all students. This approach meets the needs of struggling students and reduces the number of referrals to special education. The philosophy of the district is to transition students from special education as quickly as possible to make the re-entry a successful learning experience. In *Leadership, Association of California School Administrators* (March/April 2007, page 8), an article titled "How Differentiated Instruction Helps Struggling Students" describes how a school's reorganization is critical to support differentiated instruction and outlines how this approach can significantly improve student performance.

The district's coaching program has been in place at many school sites for many years and contributes to students' successful re-entry into regular education. Coaches work collaboratively with their colleagues to model instruction and intervention for students in a nonjudgmental manner, using reflective questioning and inquiry to help others meet challenges independently and effectively. Cognitive coaching is organized around trust and learning and is based on holonomy, which is defined as the ability to act both autonomously and interdependently at the same time (*Three Goals of Cognitive Coaching*, by Art Costa and Robert Garmston, 1994).

Interviews with a variety of staff members helped FCMAT gain an understanding of the importance of the coaching program. The program clearly provides staff with the skills

needed to work with challenging students, regardless whether these students are in special education or in general education.

The district makes full use of Section 504 plans and the SSTs to facilitate and monitor students' re-entry into general education programs.

The district also provides ongoing professional development to general education staff. Topics for the 2006-07 year included integrating technology into the curriculum, literacy centers and writing across upper grades. The district places a major focus on determining what impact professional development has on instruction and student learning.

In-service trainings are guided by staff facilitators and emphasize professional development strategies for teachers and principals because this approach ultimately affects student outcomes. Continual professional development for general education staff can significantly reduce the number of referrals to special education and provide more support for students re-entering regular education. General education teachers have limited professional development in the area of special education; however, the district's ongoing professional development and the programs in place assist all learners.

Strategies for teaching learning disabled students, students with significant language disabilities and students with behavioral issues are topics of ongoing discussions with general education teachers. In addition, general education staff members need professional development regarding the details of the IEP process and their role as participants on the IEP team.

Additional professional development needs include facilitated IEP training and training in alternative dispute resolution (ADR) for special education staff. Parenting classes would also offer additional support to teachers and students.

Site administrators appear to be aware of students enrolled in special education programs at their school sites and know who will be transitioning into the general education environment. A concern was expressed about the need to develop more programs to ensure the success of students who transition to general education. However, numerous educators appear to be involved in the transition process, including general and special education teachers, psychologists and others.

Students with IEPs who have been attending county office-operated programs appear to have a transition plan which is reflected in their IEPs, and many staff members are involved in this process. These students usually have more significant learning and behavioral needs; therefore, transition planning is a critical component of student success. For some students, the transition may need to be gradual and incremental. The district uses an effective collaborative approach to re-entry, involving students, parents, teachers and administrators. Communication and collaboration helps special education and general education staff share roles and responsibilities for student learning.

An article in *TEACHING Exceptional Children*, May/June 2006, entitled "'Survivors' or 'Friends'? A Framework for Assessing Effective Collaboration," contains an excellent

discussion of collaboration between general and special education staff and states the following:

We have found certain elements that must be present if collaboration between educators is to be productive and effective. Using our rubric and identifying developmental levels of each of the elements, a school can determine its strengths and target its energies and resources. Kathryn C. Wiggins and Sharon J. Damore have developed a checklist on the “Elements of Collaboration Rubric,” which enables a school to complete an action plan to guide and monitor future efforts to improve collaboration.

### ***Recommendations***

*The district should:*

1. Continue to provide a smooth transition for special education students as they re-enter general education. Continue involving the necessary staff members so that all staff remain informed of the students’ abilities.
2. Require that the IEP teams consider developing 504 plans and/or student study team plans when transitioning students from special education to general education.
3. Involve parents in the transition process to help ensure support for the student in the home environment.
4. Review the “Elements of Collaboration Rubric” to guide the communication and cooperation between general and special education staff when transitioning students to general education, including students in county office-operated programs.
5. Provide ongoing home support in the form of parenting classes to benefit all students, including special education students. Design a districtwide committee of staff and parents, both English speaking and non-English speaking, to ensure that the program will benefit all students.

### *Alternative Programs*

The district offers the following special education programs at 18 school sites:

- Special day classes (SDCs) serving students with nonsevere and severe disabilities.
- Early education programs, including preschool and kindergarten.
- Resource specialist programs (RSP).
- Speech and language services.
- Occupational therapy.
- Nursing services.
- Psychological services.
- Adaptive physical education.
- Additional special education programs are provided by the Santa Clara County Office of Education, the Southeast Consortium SELPA and NPS/NPA placements.

The district does not currently operate alternative programs for students exiting special education and transitioning to general education. Some students require interventions and may need additional support in the general education classrooms. Alternative programs do not have to be special education programs; they can be provided on a short-term basis or as an alternative to general education and/or special education. These programs can be options for students prior to special education or serve as a transitional step when re-entering the general education program.

Effective planning for a student's transition requires that the student's IEP have appropriate goals and objectives that reflect how the process will work and prevent obstacles. When appropriate, students should be included and directly involved in this planning and be encouraged to communicate their fears, strengths, apprehensions, and where they will feel the most comfortable in a positive learning environment. Although IDEA does not specifically require the development of an action plan, IEP teams could develop a series of assignments which should be completed to assist a student in the transition process.

Alternative programs should be available to all students on a short-term basis. For example, the district could implement learning centers, which could be appropriate for all students, including special education students. Other possible alternative programs include individual and small group instruction (ISGI), which is a designated instruction and service (DIS); communication classes; and the services of a reading specialist, which could be a non special education service.

The procedural manual of the Southeast Consortium SELPA of Santa Clara County discusses the transition requirements for infants and toddlers entering preschool programs. The Early Start program is responsible for notifying the school district of a child's potential eligibility for preschool services when the child reaches the age of 30 months. The school works with the Early Start program when students are exiting the program; however, communication with parents is limited prior to the child leaving the program. Some families with children will be involved in special education programs for most of their child's educational career and are concerned about the quality of the program throughout their child's education.

For example, as the incidence of autism continues to increase, many parents will have researched carefully in advance to determine the appropriate special education services and settings for their child. Many parents of children in the Early Start program have established eligibility with regional centers and other agencies and have been informed of alternative programs for preschool and school age students.

Clearly, parents want to know what programs and services are available, so communication with all parents in the Early Start program is critical and should occur as soon as possible. Any period of transition can be stressful for parents and children. Parents of very young children with disabilities need the support of the school system and assurance that it can provide the best education for their child. There is a need for a designated individual to serve as the district's point of contact with these parents.

The district operates an SDC program for students who are not considered severely disabled; however, these classes do serve students that may be identified as orthopedically impaired and/or autistic and can benefit from the local programs. The county office provides SDC programs for district students who require more intensive services and who have severe disabilities as defined in EC section 56030.5. There are currently 125 district students in county office-operated programs and seven students attending Spectrum, Morgan Center, Bay School, E.B. Clark and Weingarten nonpublic schools.

### **Recommendations**

*The district should:*

1. Review the service delivery model for the district's special education programs to determine if alternative programs and services might be more effective. This could expand offerings beyond the current effective special day classes and resource programs, providing IEP teams with more placement options. For example, the district might consider implementing learning centers, individual and small group instruction, communication classes and a reading specialist.
2. Invite parents of children enrolled in the Early Start program to an annual informational meeting about the district's programs and services for preschool children, and invite them to parent meetings and professional development sessions for parents.
3. Identify the coordinator of pupil services as the individual responsible for communicating with parents in the Early Start program, thus creating a single designated contact person.
4. Ensure that SST teams support students in general education classrooms during and after their transition from special education. SST teams should be identified in IEP meetings and should annually review the student's progress.

Student study teams (SSTs) should be available to periodically evaluate and support those students who are no longer eligible for special education services. The teams should work with the classroom teacher to ensure that the teacher is aware of the students' abilities and disabilities so the students can progress successfully.

5. Provide training for staff in the development of social skills to assist general education teachers in helping students develop appropriate behaviors in general education classrooms.

## *The IEP Process*

Federal law requires that each eligible student have an individualized education program (IEP), which is a written statement of the services to be provided a student with a disability. The IEP is developed, reviewed, and revised at meetings of certain required personnel, including the parent.

Federal law also requires that considerable student data be accrued, maintained and reported to the state department of education in a timely manner. The reporting and data collection requirements are complex and have changed significantly over the years, requiring more information with each change. Accurate reporting of student information is critical for funding, program purposes and management at the district and SELPA levels.

The California Special Education Management Information System (CASEMIS) is designed to assist special education local plan areas (SELPAs) in submitting critical special education student data to meet state and federal reporting requirements. It allows school districts to electronically collect and share accurate student data in a timely manner and provides the CDE with quality data at regular intervals.

The need for student and program information continues to increase; last year alone, eight new data fields were added to CASEMIS. Fortunately, customized Web-based IEP and student management systems are now available, and a variety of software packages have been developed to gather information electronically for reporting. The Southeast SELPA of Santa Clara County has contracted with Faucett Micro Systems to implement a computerized CASEMIS/IEP system to collect special education student data.

It does not appear that the district has in place a computerized CASEMIS program; all CASEMIS data is input manually. As of May 11, 2007, the district had 403 IEPs that were not entered into the CASEMIS system, representing 35% of its 1,150 special education students. This sends a message to the CDE that the district has not completed IEP reviews in a timely manner and could be viewed as out of compliance. The district could also be affected financially. Therefore, entering these IEPs and implementing procedures to ensure timely entry in the future should be high priorities.

Many of the district's principals chair IEP meetings and are knowledgeable about special education; however, they are not given the responsibility or authority to make financial commitments for the district. Program issues that may have a fiscal effect on the district require another meeting with either the director or coordinator of pupil services. This requires staff and parents to attend two meetings, has the potential to delay placement and services to students, and may increase the possibility of litigation.

FCMAT learned that no professional development has been provided to IEP teams regarding facilitated IEP meetings and alternative dispute resolution (ADR). It can sometimes be beneficial for IEP teams to bring in a skilled IEP facilitator to help the IEP team perform better by using strategies for interacting respectfully, providing all participants

a chance to communicate and focusing on the needs of the student. Facilitated IEP meetings can yield great benefits and resolve concerns early, preventing due process filings and complaints. Facilitators need to be trained in this process and their skills should be used in potentially difficult IEP meetings.

Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) is a process for resolving conflicts which respects the dignity of all individuals while creating mutually satisfying solutions. The ADR process uses a variety of skills including communication, collaboration, negotiation and mediation to develop an agreement that meets the needs of parents and schools.

Many SELPAs have an ADR process in place and have staff members who are trained in facilitated IEP meetings. It is important for school districts to develop alternative solutions when working with parents, particularly in the area of special education. Due process, mediation and attorney fees can be extremely costly for all parties and may not yield the desired results for any of the parties. The Sonoma County SELPA has offered a successful ADR program for many years. A flyer regarding ADR is located in Appendix B.

### **Recommendations**

*The district should:*

1. Establish a CASEMIS/IEP committee to develop and implement a computerized IEP process and reporting system and to discuss topics such as professional development, data collection and reporting, and equipment. The committee should develop an action plan and review it regularly, with copies provided to the superintendent.

When implementing the computerized IEP process, the district should do the following:

- Develop a short term plan to meet immediate and urgent reporting requirements.
- Work with the SELPA administrator to create an intensive professional development plan and calendar through fall 2007, focused on the computerized IEP process. In-service training sessions should include topics such as how the district will involve parents in the computerized IEP process so that they are considered a part of the IEP team, how to make corrections and additions to IEP meetings, and how to send progress notes.
- Provide professional development to all staff regarding how to input data and how to use Web-based programs for planning.
- Create a system at each school site so that all members of the IEP team can view the written electronic input as it is being developed and entered at IEP meetings.
- Review random samples of IEPs to ensure that information is being entered accurately.

- Hold weekly meetings with office staff members who are currently entering data, and develop timelines for reviewing the accuracy of the data entered.
  - Implement cross-training so that a backup employee is able to enter data into the computerized CASEMIS system.
  - Work with the technology department to develop communication, guidelines and agreements regarding when and how their services will be used to support the new system.
2. Consider developing a districtwide plan to allow principals to make financial decisions at IEP meetings to avoid the cost and inconvenience of a second meeting. Form a principals' committee to represent schools and develop guidelines for principals to follow when making these decisions.
  3. Consider developing an action plan to provide professional development in the areas of facilitated IEP meetings and ADR to address complaints and due process filings.

Work with the SELPA administrator regarding professional development options in the areas of facilitated IEP training and ADR. For training models and further information, contact the Sonoma County SELPA, the Contra Costa County SELPA, the Placer County SELPA and the SELPA Administrators Organization of California.

## *Autism Services*

Autism is one of the fastest growing disability areas nationwide. In 2001-02, 2.2% of the state's special education students had autism spectrum disorders. By 2004-05 this figure had risen to 4.3%, an increase of 109% in five years. For more than a decade, the most commonly litigated issue in special education has been the provision of educational services to students with autism spectrum disorders. The services for this population are costly and intensive, and there are many methodologies. Most courts will defer to the school district with regard to the chosen methodology.

In 2005-06 the district allocated \$380,000 for applied behavioral analysis (ABA) services from NPAs for students with autism. District staff reported that these services are provided as in-home services because students frequently transition into the district at age three with in-home services on their IEP. A number of California school districts have eliminated in-home ABA services and successfully implemented a sequence of services within the school program for these students. The SELPA administrator should be able to assist the district in locating information on these programs and districts.

One hundred twenty-five of the district's severely disabled students and students with autism are served in 16 different county office-operated programs. Although the district provides some programming for students with autism, those who require intensive services have traditionally been assigned to a county office-operated program.

The cost of county office services for district students with autism and severe disabilities is approximately \$3.5 million per year, \$2.3 million of which is property tax money that has been allocated to the district for this purpose. The district expressed concern regarding the rising cost of these services and the potential need for significant contributions from the general fund. The district does not currently have any programs specifically designated for autistic students, though it does provide services for approximately 90 autistic spectrum students. Thus the district must rely on the county office and nonpublic agencies.

## *Recommendations*

*The district should:*

1. Consider developing district programs for students with autism, using a range of methodologies.
2. Continue eliminating the use of in-home ABA programs and develop a sequence of services within the school program. Contact the SELPA administrator for information on districts that have accomplished this successfully.
3. Gather input from parents regarding the range of services the district might offer to students with autism.
4. Work with the regional center and the county office-operated programs to ensure a smooth transition from in-home ABA programs to school-based programs at age three.

## *One-to-One Paraprofessionals*

The district has 15 one-to-one paraprofessionals working with students who have IEPs in district-operated programs. This number does not include the one-to-one paraprofessionals who work with district students who are enrolled in county office-operated programs.

Although this appears to be a relatively small number, it is likely to grow. Most parents in the communities the district serves have access to the internet and thus to a vast amount of information about special education services and their legal rights, including information on requesting one-to-one aides, written by an attorney (see <http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/relsvc.aide.steedman.htm>).

The district does not have a written policy or procedures that contain criteria for assigning, reducing or ending the services of a one-to-one paraprofessional. The SELPA manual does include such a procedure, but it appears to be incomplete. Many school districts and county offices have extensive and effective procedures to determine when a one-to-one paraprofessional is needed, as well as a plan to determine when these services may be reduced or eliminated.

It appears that the district's 15 one-to-one paraprofessionals are working the following hours.

- 7 employees - 6 hours per day
- 1 employee - 5 hours per day
- 2 employees - 5.5 hours per day
- 3 employees - 4 hours per day

The majority of students receiving one-to-one assistance have autism; the remainder have orthopedic or other health impairments.

The cost of the district's one-to-one paraprofessionals is \$267,576 for salaries and \$169,623 for benefits, for a total cost of \$437,199. This results in an average salary and benefit cost of \$44,508 per employee, or \$29,146 per student. The average cost of benefits for these employees is also high at 63.39% of the salary cost.

Without a policy or procedures containing criteria for the use of one-to-one paraprofessionals, it is likely that the number of these employees and the costs will grow substantially as the special education population increases or if students currently in county office one-to-one programs return to district programs. The absence of policies, procedures and criteria also increases the potential for adversarial interactions among parents, the IEP team and the administration.

Two issues typically arise with regard to the use of one-to-one paraprofessionals. The first issue centers on the one-to-one paraprofessional in a self contained special education classroom where the student spends the majority of the day working only with the one-to-one paraprofessional. The second issue centers on the parent who is concerned about the

acceptance, support and instruction their child will receive in general education classes when their student spends most of their day working only with the one-to-one paraprofessional.

Both of these issues present challenges for the IEP teams. In *TEACHING Exceptional Children*, Vol. 37, 2005 (Council for Exceptional Children), an article entitled “Be Careful What you Wish for...Five Reasons to be concerned about the assignment of Individual Paraprofessionals” gives the following five reasons for concern:

1. The least qualified staff members are teaching students with the most complex learning characteristics.
2. Paraprofessional supports are linked with inadvertent detrimental effects.
3. Individual paraprofessional supports are linked with a lower level of teacher involvement.
4. Teachers, parents, and students may not be getting what they deserve or expect.
5. Providing paraprofessional support may delay attention to the need for changes in schools.

### **Recommendations**

*The district should:*

1. Develop a board policy and procedures for implementing a one-to-one paraprofessional plan.
2. Develop a one-to-one paraprofessional manual of procedures and criteria to be used by IEP teams to determine the need for a one-to-one paraprofessional. For example, a one-to-one paraprofessional request could be for behavioral issues, medical needs, integration, instruction, psychological needs or other reasons. Consider contacting Tahoe-Truckee Unified School District and Napa Valley Unified School District for sample manuals.
3. Provide professional development programs to train teachers and one-to-one paraprofessionals about the one-to-one policy, procedures, manual and plan. School psychologists, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, APE teachers, parents and others should also receive training regarding the one-to-one program and policies.
4. Provide one-to-one paraprofessionals with initial and ongoing training in curriculum, behavior, medical needs, tutoring, disability awareness and other relevant topics.
6. Develop a procedure to be followed when a one-to-one paraprofessional is absent or otherwise not available.

7. Ensure that IEP teams include an appropriate fading plan when implementing the services of a one-to-one paraprofessional.
8. Ensure that the one-to-one manual, policies, procedures and criteria are provided to and reviewed with parents so that they are informed.
9. Identify an administrator who will be responsible for the one-to-one paraprofessional program.
10. Develop a procedure for evaluating the effectiveness of the one-to-one program. Areas to be evaluated should include student progress, quality and effectiveness of the program based on specific criteria, staff turnover rate, parent satisfaction based on specific questions from a districtwide survey, fiscal impact, and number of students transitioning out of the programs.
11. Include relevant portions of the one-to-one manual in the IEP document to maintain a record of the IEP teams' decisions. The IEP should also include a proposed date for termination or reduction of the student's one-to-one services.
12. Ensure that each student's case manager monitors the student's one-to-one plan and communicates student progress to all persons involved, especially the parents and the student.
13. Provide the superintendent with data on the one-to-one paraprofessional program monthly for at least the first six months.



# *Appendices*

APPENDICES

## *Appendix A*

### *Sample Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Flyer*

APPENDICES

## THE ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS ...

1. When you call for assistance, SELPA's ADR Coordinator will listen to your concerns and help you identify your issues and interests. Information about special education laws and practices may be provided, if relevant, and a referral may be made to others who can appropriately work with your issues.
2. The Coordinator will explain how the ADR program and its components work, then determine the best option for resolution.
3. If an ADR Resource Parent is requested, the Coordinator will contact a Resource Parent and have that person get in touch with you.
4. If the Independent Child Advocate is determined to be the best option, the ADR Coordinator will have the Advocate contact you directly.
5. If Local Mediation or a Solutions Team is requested, the Coordinator will, with your permission, contact the other party and encourage their participation in the process.
6. If the other party agrees to the process, the Coordinator will assign a Local Mediator or Solutions Team. The mediator(s) will then contact you to complete a case assessment and set the location and time of the ADR session.
7. When an agreement is reached, the details are put into an agreement form and signed by everyone involved.



### SONOMA COUNTY SELPA

*Alternative Dispute Resolution Program*

5340 Skyline Boulevard, Santa Rosa, CA 95403

*If you have a disagreement  
involving a child with disabilities,  
Alternative Dispute Resolution  
may be the solution.*

**ALTERNATIVE  
DISPUTE  
RESOLUTION**

*"ADR is a great process for  
bringing together schools and  
families. We wholeheartedly  
endorse this program."*

Sonoma County SELPA  
Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

**ADR HELPLINE ■ (707) 524-2785**



### SONOMA COUNTY SELPA

5340 Skyline Boulevard  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403  
(707) 524-2750

# WHAT IS ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION?

*Alternative Dispute Resolution, or ADR, is a process for resolving conflicts in a manner that respects the dignity of individuals while creating mutually satisfying solutions. ADR uses communication, collaboration, negotiation, and mediation to produce an agreement that meets the interests of the parties involved. When participating in Alternative Dispute Resolution, parents and districts maintain the right to seek state-level due process.*

*The Sonoma County SELPA will facilitate an Alternative Dispute Resolution process to help resolve conflicts between schools and families with children in special education. The program serves the families of all children in special education within Sonoma County. Major components of the program include:*

## ■ ADR RESOURCE PARENTS

Resource Parents are Sonoma County parents who have been trained in special education law and practice and have learned the skills necessary to help resolve conflicts between families and schools. They can help parents understand the law and the special education system, as well as assist them in identifying and clarifying concerns and interests. Parents may request support from an ADR Resource Parent at any IEP. While the Resource Parent is not an advocate, he or she can help parents understand what is happening in the meeting and educate them about their rights and responsibilities.

## ■ IEP FACILITATION

Parents or school staff may request that an ADR-trained SELPA Program Specialist facilitate an IEP meeting if the meeting is expected to be difficult. The facilitator uses a specific technique designed to assist the

parties in completing the IEP while maintaining good relationships.

## ■ INDEPENDENT CHILD ADVOCATE

The Independent Child Advocate is a neutral ombudsman trained in ADR. The Advocate is assigned to difficult cases where relationships are at risk and communication is limited. The Advocate is knowledgeable about special education law and programs.

## ■ LOCAL MEDIATION/SOLUTIONS TEAMS

Both Local Mediation and Solutions Teams use an effective problem-solving method that allows parties in dispute to reach a mutually agreeable solution. It is a safe, low-pressure process guided by a single mediator (Local Mediation) or a team of two mediators (Solutions Team). A Solutions Team is typically composed of one parent of a child with disabilities and one educator, both from outside the district.

*It's an idea whose time has come*

## WHY CHOOSE ADR?

The Alternative Dispute Resolution process was developed in response to the growing need for a better way for families and schools to resolve their differences around special education. The process is:

### ■ SATISFYING

Alternative Dispute Resolution uses neutral intervention and support to assist the two parties in reaching a mutually agreeable solution. A safe, collaborative working relationship is developed and supported, building trust between the parties.

### ■ COST-EFFECTIVE

As opposed to due process, ADR options have no costs. Alternative Dispute Resolution does not involve the use of attorneys.

### ■ FAST AND EFFICIENT

Most of the ADR options are initiated within 72 hours of the initial contact. This is considerably faster than the 45-day timeline for state-level due process.

### ■ CONFIDENTIAL

All information shared or collected through the ADR process is held confidential unless both parties agree to release it.

### ■ RESULTS-ORIENTED

ADR options usually result in mutually acceptable verbal agreements or written agreements if the parties choose to have them.

## Appendix B

### District Salary and Benefit Costs Compared to County Office Salary and Benefit Costs.

<b>Evergreen SD Certificated</b>					
FTE	TOTAL SAL	PER FTE	TOT BEN	PER FTE	
3.000	\$167,137	\$55,712	\$54,600	\$18,200	
2.000	\$136,055	\$68,028	\$42,776	\$21,388	
18.000	\$1,236,326	\$68,685	\$387,183	\$21,510	
23.000	\$1,539,518	\$66,936	\$484,559	\$21,068	
		SAL	Ben	Tot Cert	
Combined Sal/Hlth per ADA		\$66,936	\$21,068	\$88,003	
			inc ESY (1.16%)	\$102,084	
<b>COE Sal/Ben inc ESY (COE info only provided as combined total)</b>				<b>\$99,612</b>	
<b>Evergreen SD Classified</b>					
FTE	TOTAL SAL	PER FTE	TOT BEN	PER FTE	
41.125	\$1,204,992	\$29,301	\$565,154	\$13,742	
		SAL	Ben	Tot Class	
Combined Sal/Hlth per ADA		\$29,301	\$13,742	\$43,043	
			inc ESY (1.16%)	\$49,930	
<b>COE Sal/Ben inc ESY (COE info only provided as combined total)</b>				<b>\$54,587</b>	
<b>Comparison of Instructional Personnel Costs: COE v ESD</b>					
	COE Teacher/ Aide per SDC		ESD Teacher/ Aide per SDC		
	FTE	Per SDC	FTE	Per SDC	Difference
Tchr Sal/Ben	\$1.000	\$99,612	\$1.000	\$102,084	\$(2,472)
Aide Sal/Ben	\$1.376	\$75,112	\$1.376	\$68,704	\$6,408
		Combined Diff (possible savings per SDC)			\$3,936

APPENDICES

*Appendix C*  
*Study Agreement*

APPENDICES

FISCAL CRISIS & MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM  
STUDY AGREEMENT  
March 26, 2007

The FISCAL CRISIS AND MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM (FCMAT), hereinafter referred to as the Team, and the **Evergreen School District**, hereinafter referred to as the District, mutually agree as follows:

1. BASIS OF AGREEMENT

The Team provides a variety of services to school districts and county offices of education upon request. The District has requested that the Team provide for the assignment of professionals to study specific aspects of the Evergreen School District operations. These professionals may include staff of the Team, County Offices of Education, the California State Department of Education, school districts, or private contractors. All work shall be performed in accordance with the terms and conditions of this Agreement.

2. SCOPE OF THE WORK

A. Scope and Objectives of the Study

The scope and objectives of this study are to:

- 1) Review the efficiency and effectiveness of the District's Special Education fiscal and program delivery system and provide recommendations for improvements, if applicable.
- 2) Review the districts policies, procedures, and assessment guidelines related to Student Study Teams and the identification and placement of students into the Special Education program; Reentry of students back into Regular Education classes or available Alternative programs; services for students with Autism; and the IEP process; and provide recommendations for improvements for possible cost containment while continuing to provide appropriate services to students.
- 3) Review the district process on the hiring and length of assignment of one-on-one paraprofessionals and make recommendations for improvement, if applicable

B. Services and Products to be Provided

- 1) Orientation Meeting - The Team will conduct an orientation session at the District to brief District management and supervisory personnel on the procedures of the Team and on the purpose and schedule of the study.
- 2) On-site Review - The Team will conduct an on-site review at the District office and at school sites if necessary.
- 3) Progress Reports - The Team will hold an exit meeting at the conclusion

of the on-site review to inform the District of significant findings and recommendations to that point.

- 4) Exit Letter - The Team will issue an exit letter approximately 10 days after the exit meeting detailing significant findings and recommendations to date and memorializing the topics discussed in the exit meeting.
- 5) Draft Reports - Sufficient copies of a preliminary draft report will be delivered to the District administration for review and comment.
- 6) Final Report - Sufficient copies of the final study report will be delivered to the District following completion of the review.

3. PROJECT PERSONNEL

The study team will be supervised by Anthony L. Bridges, Deputy Executive Officer, Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team, Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office. The study team may also include:

- A. Dr. William Gillaspie, FCMAT Management Analyst
- B. Kay Atchison, FCMAT Special Education Consultant
- C. James "Sarge" Kennedy, FCMAT Special Education Consultant
- D. JoAnn Murphy, FCMAT Special Education Consultant

Other equally qualified consultants will be substituted in the event one of the above noted individuals are unable to participate in the study.

4. PROJECT COSTS

The cost for studies requested pursuant to E.C. 42127.8(d)(1) shall be:

- A. \$500.00 per day for each Team Member while on site, conducting fieldwork at other locations, preparing and presenting reports, or participating in meetings.
- B. All out-of-pocket expenses, including travel, meals, lodging, etc. Based on the elements noted in section 2 A, the total cost of the study is estimated at \$20,000. The District will be invoiced at actual costs, with 50% of the estimated cost due following the completion of the on-site review and the remaining amount due upon acceptance of the final report by the District
- C. Any change to the scope will affect the estimate of total cost.

Payments for FCMAT services are payable to Kern County Superintendent of Schools-Administrative Agent.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DISTRICT

- A. The District will provide office and conference room space while on-site reviews are in progress.
- B. The District will provide the following (if requested):

- 1) A map of the local area
- 2) Existing policies, regulations and prior reports addressing the study request
- 3) Current organizational charts
- 4) Current and four (4) prior year's audit reports
- 5) Any documents requested on a supplemental listing

C. The District Administration will review a preliminary draft copy of the study. Any comments regarding the accuracy of the data presented in the report or the practicability of the recommendations will be reviewed with the Team prior to completion of the final report.

Pursuant to EC 45125.1(c), representatives of FCMAT will have limited contact with District pupils. The District shall take appropriate steps to comply with EC 45125.1(c).

6. PROJECT SCHEDULE

The following schedule outlines the planned completion dates for key study milestones:

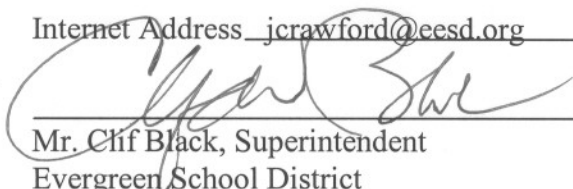
Orientation:	May 8, 2007
Staff Interviews:	May 8-11, 2007
Exit Interviews:	May 11, 2007
Preliminary Report Submitted:	June 22, 2007
Final Report Submitted:	To be determined
Board Presentation:	To be determined

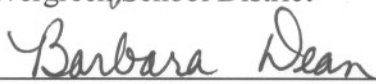
7. CONTACT PERSON

Please print name of contact person: James Crawford,  
Assistant Superintendent of Business Services

Telephone 408 270-6847 FAX 408 223-3374

Internet Address jcrawford@eesd.org

  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 4/19/07  
 Mr. Cliff Black, Superintendent Date  
 Evergreen School District

  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Mar 27, 2007  
 Barbara Dean, Deputy Administrative Officer Date  
 Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team

In keeping with the provisions of AB1200, the County Superintendent will be notified of this agreement between the District and FCMAT and will receive a copy of the final report.