

(ATTACHMENT 1) REPORT AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON SERVICES PROVIDED TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE)

This item initiated by the Administration.

ADMINISTRATION'S REPORT

1. One of the most significant components of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act-2004 is the requirement that, to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities be educated with children who are not disabled. Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes, with the use of supplementary aids and services, cannot be achieved satisfactorily.
2. Best practices and research strongly support education in the least restrictive environment (LRE), with access to the general curriculum, because it leads to high expectations and achievement outcomes for students with disabilities. The strong preference in the law is that the child will be educated using the general education curriculum in the regular education classroom. The Milwaukee Public Schools is committed to ensuring that all students receive high-quality educational services and that students with disabilities receive as many services as appropriate in classrooms and other educational environments with their non-disabled peers.

LRE FOR HIGHER OUTCOMES

3. As part of its focus on increasing academic and behavioral outcomes for students with disabilities, the Department of Specialized Services has developed a plan of support to ensure that every child is receiving special education services in the LRE. Beginning this school year, all schools must complete and submit an LRE plan as part of their School Improvement Plan. Within that plan, schools must identify a team to work on LRE as well as a targeted goal and steps to reach that goal, including professional development
4. Anecdotal results from specialized services staff indicates that:
 - a. Schools are having IEP meetings to move students into more inclusive environments, yet match the services as written in their IEP's. This includes students being programmed into regular education classes, either with or without support, as well as accessing more general education curriculum in existing environments.
 - b. More students with disabilities are being included inside the regular education classroom 80% or more of their day (42.36% this month as opposed to 42.09% last month).
 - c. Slightly more students with disabilities are being self-contained more than 60% of their day (22.03% this month as opposed to 21.90% last month). This number is very slowly increasing and will be an area of concentration in the upcoming months.
 - d. A small committee of cross departmental persons convened to develop a plan to address the high number of suspensions for students with disabilities as well as the growing self containment. Data is currently being analyzed to determine where resources are needed in 3 large high schools. A team will then be sent out to support teachers or systems for a 3 week minimum period of time.

- e. Central Services continues to work with schools to ensure their working knowledge of what is and is not a LRE. At the most recent Banking Day, administration reiterated to all staff in grades K-8, the importance of making appropriate IEP team decisions in regard to LRE. It was emphasized that quality is much more important than quantity in how services are delivered to students with disabilities
- f. At the most recent K-8 Banking Day, all teachers that work with students with disabilities, as well as diagnostic teachers and Speech Pathologists, were included in the professional development around Common Core State Standards (CCSS) so as to provide an even deeper foundation for making educationally sound decisions in determining LRE. The main idea is that teachers need to fully understand the CCSS in order to decide whether or not a student is able to access the regular education environment and if not, how to work toward this reality

LRE DATA

- 5. IDEA-2004 identified 20 indicators of performance that would help steer states to develop State Improvement Plans that target improvements for special education. One of the indicators addresses documentation of programs and services in the least restrictive environment for students 6 to 21 years of age. The State target data for this indicator, which were developed with input from a statewide stakeholder group, provide each district with a target in each of the following identified categories:
 - Indicator #5A Students removed from non-disabled peers less than 21% (of school Time)
 - Indicator #5B Students removed greater than 60% from non-disabled peers
 - Indicator #5C Students enrolled in separate schools, residential facilities, or Homebound/hospital placements
- 6. The following data provide a district-wide snapshot of LRE data-relative services in discrete categories (as defined by DPI and IDEA) and a comparison with the State target. Currently the district is posting modest positive movement in two of the three LRE areas. The District has increased the number of students who removed from their non-disabled peers less than 21% of the school day and slightly increased the number of students who are self contained for more than 60% of their day. Schools are in the process of updating their LRE plans. Regional Coordinators of Specialized Services will use this information to further develop individualized support plans.

IDEA-LRE Indicator #5 Data	5A: Less than 21%	5B: Greater than 60%	5C: Other Environments
State Target	54.74%	11.2%	1.25%
MPS-September 2011	34.44%	21.95%	.31%
MPS-October 2011	36.97%	21.83%	.51%
MPS-November 2011	39.26%	21.93%	.50%
MPS-December 2011	41.61%	21.82%	.49%
MPS-January 2012	42.09%	21.90%	.55%
MPS-February 2012	42.36%	22.03%	.57%

7. The Department of Specialized Services worked with the Regional Teams to ensure the development of school-based LRE Action Plans last month. At this time, all traditional schools have an action plan in place. Regional Coordinators of Specialized Services (RCSS) monitored those plans to ensure that every school had submitted one. They are now ensuring that the plans are solid and that they are being followed. They will report that information to the Interim Director of Specialized Services as well as their individual Regional Executive Specialist.

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