



Santee School District

Special Education Review

June 11, 2008

Joel D. Montero
Chief Executive Officer



CSIS California School Information Services

June 11, 2008

Dr. Lisbeth A. Johnson, Superintendent
Santee School District
9625 Cuyamaca Street
Santee, California 92071

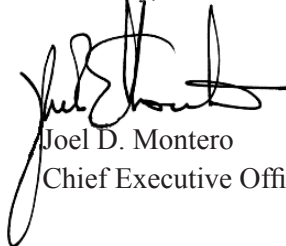
Dear Superintendent Johnson,

In February 2008, the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) entered into an agreement for a special education review with the Santee School District. The request specified that FCMAT would:

1. Conduct a review of the district's special education program to enable the district to better understand if there are ways to enhance the instructional delivery model for students and the processes for communication with parents. Provide recommendations for enhancing special education programs, as needed.
2. Analyze the district's special education revenues and expenditures to validate if the district is maximizing available resources through cost effective and appropriate service delivery models. Program costs have increased above available funding at about a 2% increase over the last five years in spite of an average 3% decline in overall student enrollment in the district. Provide recommendations to maximize resources including options for alternative services and solutions.
3. Involve district teaching, classified, administrative staff, and parents in providing information to the team about the nature and benefits of the district's special education programs.

The attached final report contains the FCMAT study team's findings and recommendations. We appreciate the opportunity to serve you and we extend our thanks to all the staff of the Santee School District.

Sincerely,



Joel D. Montero
Chief Executive Officer

FCMAT

Joel D. Montero, Chief Executive Officer

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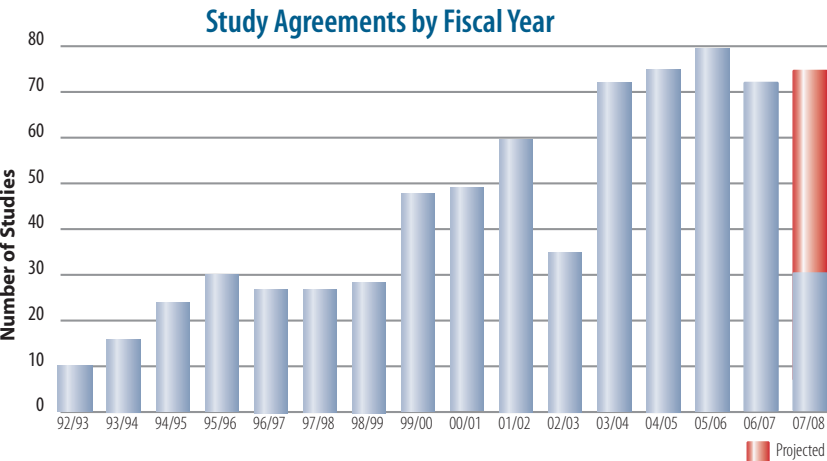
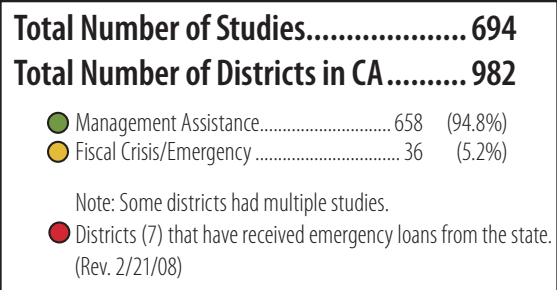
Foreword

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 nearly 700 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.



Introduction

The Santee School District serves approximately 6,173 students in grades kindergarten through eight in eastern San Diego County, 18 miles northeast of the city of San Diego. The district has nine K-8 schools and one K-6 school. Among the district's belief statements are that all students can learn and that academic performance and positive personal development are the highest measures of district success. The district offers a full array of special education programs and services through its association with the East County Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA).

The scope and objectives of the study agreement between the district and the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) are as follows:

1. Conduct a review of the district's special education program to enable the district to better understand if there are ways to enhance the instructional delivery model for students and the processes for communication with parents. Provide recommendations for enhancing special education programs, as needed.
2. Analyze the district's special education revenues and expenditures to validate if the district is maximizing available resources through cost effective and appropriate service delivery models. Program costs have increased above available funding at about a 2% increase over the last five years in spite of an average 3% decline in overall student enrollment in the district. Provide recommendations to maximize resources including options for alternative services and solutions.
3. Involve district teaching, classified, administrative staff, and parents in providing information to the team about the nature and benefits of the district's special education programs.

Study Team

The FCMAT study team was composed of the following members:

William P. Gillaspie, Ed.D.
Management Analyst
Fiscal Crisis and Management
Assistance Team

JoAnn Murphy
FCMAT Special Education Consultant
Santee, California

James "Sarge" Kennedy
FCMAT Special Education Consultant
Red Bluff, California

Laura Haywood
Public Information Specialist
Fiscal Crisis and Management
Assistance Team
Bakersfield, California

Study Guidelines

A FCMAT team visited the district in April 2008 to conduct interviews, collect data and review documentation. This report is the result of those activities. Findings and recommendations are presented in the following sections:

- Service Levels and Options
- Fiscal Efficiency
- Program Delivery

Executive Summary

The Santee School District is committed to parents and staff in providing a fiscally efficient special education program and offers a strong curriculum for students with exceptional needs. From the 2004-05 through 2006-07 fiscal years, the total cost of the special education services provided by the district increased by 5.7%, from \$8.96 million to \$9.46 million.

Comparing the costs per student for special education by funding source, total direct special education costs increased by 18.15%, from \$7,807 per student in 2004-05 to \$9,224 per student in 2006-07. Federal funding for those costs increased by 15.76%, from \$1,237 to \$1,432 per student, and state funding increased by only 4.45%, \$5,485 to \$5,729 per student. The small increase in state support is partly a result of the bifurcation of the state target rate for use in computing the COLA revenue. Therefore, the total direct costs for special education exceeded the growth in revenue for this three-year period.

It is recommended for the district to review roles and responsibilities pertaining to special education and pupil personnel service activities, revise the pertinent job descriptions, and establish realistic staffing ratios with very clear expectations for job performance. This would include clarifying the administrative/supervisory roles and responsibilities between central administration and site administration. Any change in the proposed job descriptions or working conditions should be reviewed with the respective bargaining unit or association.

With enrollment generally declining, the district may also want to evaluate the staffing level of psychological services it provides. The recommended caseload ratio for school psychologists to general education students is 1:1,596. The district's ratio is 1:1,324.

Because Santee operates a relatively small home-to-school transportation system, there is little opportunity to utilize the regular bus routes to transport students with disabilities who require transportation. This results in a proportionately larger program than would be expected, with additional costs. The district may want to request the services of a neighboring transportation director to review this aspect of the program.

The district might also consider offering to pay parents in-lieu transportation costs to transport their own children with disabilities to/from school. Many districts, particularly in isolated rural areas of California, use this option extensively.

The district routinely charges staff costs to special education funds for pre-referral activities such as student assistance teams (SATs) and Response to Intervention. While these services are very valuable, they should not be charged to special education because they are regular education activities.

The district's well-defined SAT process is clearly a function of general education. Observations in five district schools showed that the procedures are well articulated across the district. Parents are active participants and can engage in brainstorming sessions with the team. Each student's action plan contains defined strategies to address concerns, including time lines and the responsible staff. This very viable process is designed as a pre-referral intervention, although some inconsistencies exist from school to school. Consistent district-wide intervention programs (beyond the typical classroom) and school-wide accommodations are limited.

The district may want to review the current adaptive physical education program to ensure that it focuses primarily on addressing the needs of students requiring individualized physical education programs.

The district may not be maximizing available resources such as the MAA, MediCal and AB 602 funding allocations. Six or seven teachers may retire at the end of the school year, which could save the district as much as \$150,000 to \$175,000 for the 2008-09 fiscal year if retired teachers are replaced by newly credentialed ones.

Special day classes fall well within the statewide staffing benchmarks developed by School Services of California (SSC). The statewide average is 11.4%.

The district does not have specific eligibility and exit criteria for the various disabilities. Each disability area should have criteria to guide the process from the selection of appropriate assessment instruments and strategies to determining educational need and eligibility for special education services. Similar criteria should be developed for various program aspects: transportation, extended year services, and individual related services (speech, adaptive physical education, occupational therapy, etc.).

There are several ways to ensure that students receive the instructional support they need through the use of collaborative models of teaching in the general education setting. The district has explored but not fully implemented collaborative models. The special education department has a separate defined curriculum for special education students with little or no integration into the curriculum used in general education.

The district may want to consider restructuring the leadership roles of a newly redesigned collaborative model by combining the expertise of a general and a special education administrator. This might be done by restructuring the administrative resources in the PPS and Special Education departments.

General education teachers are not always aware that a student has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) until mid year. This results in compliance issues, and student progress is impeded because no special education services have been provided. Even when general education teachers know that the student has an IEP, they may be unaware of the

specific disability and its impact on learning in the general curriculum, or the goals and objectives on the IEP. General education teachers need training in crisis behavior management to ensure student and staff safety.

In interviews, about one-third of the parents stated that they must push for the necessary special education and support services. Most of the parents interviewed indicated they do not feel that they are equal partners in the IEP process. Parents who are new to special education stated they were confused by the IEP process and documentation. There is no clear system for communicating the range of options available. Parents rely on other parents to inform them of these options and how to obtain them for their children.

There is a conflict of leadership roles and responsibilities between special education and the school sites. Little collaboration occurs between site administrators and special education leadership on curriculum, program development and delivery. It is unclear whether the site or district is responsible for the special education instructional supply budget. There is confusion over whether the site or special education is responsible for test protocols for students assessed for special education.

The district's special day class teachers have limited professional development opportunities. While resource specialists and speech pathologists are released during the contract day to attend job-alike groups for training and support, special day class teachers in severe and nonsevere classes have no such opportunity. Training needs include educating IEP team members on the options available for special education students; crisis intervention strategies for general education teachers; reading, math and language arts strategies for special education teachers; and training for principals on the IEP process and team decision-making.

There appears to be limited coordination between the special education, human resources and business departments. Greater efficiency can be attained between human resources and special education by implementing effective position control that directly links staffing needs to budget development.

This independent and external review examines program and fiscal effectiveness, with the intent of maximizing services to students and parents. The report also addresses staff and parental needs for professional development that will help them to collaborate in meeting the students' needs and goals.

Service Levels and Options

In 2003-04, the district reported 6,764.91 units of average daily attendance (ADA) from a student enrollment of 6,993. This equates to a 96.73% attendance factor for reporting purposes. Five years later, in the 2007-08 fiscal year, the district reported 6,114.27 ADA from a student enrollment of 6,173. This is a five-year reduction of 9.62% in reported ADA, while the student enrollment declined by 11.73% during the same period. This data indicates improved attendance-to-enrollment ratios, which will have a positive fiscal effect for the district.

As a subset of the district's total ADA, the number of students with disabilities dropped from 995 in 2004-05 to 833 in the current year, a reduction of 162 students. Thus the rate of identification of students with disabilities also dropped; however, the district is still identifying students at a greater rate (13.6%) than the state (11.43%) or San Diego County as a whole (12.77%).

Year	Identified	Percent of ADA	Percent of Enrollment
2004-05	995	14.7%	14.2%
2007-08	833	13.6%	13.5%

This finding suggests that emphasis on early interventions has helped students to accrue greater educational benefits. These efforts should be continued and strengthened.

Of some interest are the variances in the number of students identified as having a disability but not served by the district. In 2004-05, there was one more identified (995) than served (994), which suggests that the student was in a regional program. In 2007-08, the difference in the number of students identified (833) and the number of students with disabilities served (827) is six. In the interim the difference was as high as 22. FCMAT received no clear explanation for these variances. The number served can also include students who may be residents of other districts, so the difference between the number of residents and the number served could actually be greater. Since the district will most likely pay the serving district for any excess costs associated with these students, these placements and costs should be closely monitored to ensure that the most cost effective program is utilized for that student. Similarly, the district should be billing the district of residence for the costs associated with serving their students.

District staff seemed unaware of this situation and could only account for 14 students being served by other agencies. Consequently, the figures over the last four years may be much larger than they appear. This is a potential fiscal problem for the district. The business office needs accurate information regarding where students are placed, any fiscal obligations that might emanate from those placements, and which students are

being served from other districts to be able to bill the district of residence appropriately. Given the information provided to FCMAT about these situations by the district's special education staff, it is quite possible that the business office has inaccurate or insufficient information with which to address these issues.

Beginning in the 2004-05 school year, each district has had to report its special education expenditures in a format that demonstrates its observance of the non-supplanting requirements of federal laws and maintenance of the required fiscal effort. That data can also be useful in analyzing special education per pupil costs.

An analysis of the maintenance of effort reports verified that the district's special education costs per pupil have risen as the numbers of students with disabilities receiving special education services has decreased.

From 2004-05 through 2006-07, the total cost of the special education services provided by the district increased by 5.7%, from \$8.96 million to \$9.46 million. The direct special education costs alone increased 3.3%, from \$7.57 million to \$7.82 million.

The effects are most obviously reflected in the following comparison of costs per student for special education by funding source.

Funding Source	2004-05 Funding	2006-07 Funding	Percentage Increase
Federal	\$1,237	\$1,432	15.76%
State	\$5,485	\$5,729	4.45%
District	\$1,111	\$2,063	85.7%
Total Cost Per Student	\$7,833	\$9,224	18.15%

Total direct special education costs increased by 18.15%, from \$7,807 per student in 2004-05 to \$9,224 per student in 2006-07. Federal funding for those costs increased by 15.76%, from \$1,237 to \$1,432 per student, and state funding increased by only 4.45%, \$5,485 to \$5,729 per student. The small increase in state support is partly a result of the bifurcation of the state target rate for use in computing the COLA revenue.

During the same period, the district's share of the cost increased 85.7%, from \$1,111 to \$2,063 per student.

During the period between 2003-04 and 2006-07, the average total expenditure per K-8 student in the district, including students with disabilities, increased from \$6,906 to \$8,119, an increase of 17.6%. This increase in the basic expenditure per student for all students would affect the average cost per student with a disability, and vice versa. Since the special education expenditures are included in the calculation of the K-8 average per ADA expense, they will tend to increase the rate per ADA. Conversely, if the per ADA

rate increases, it is likely to cause increases in the special education cost per student, since teacher salaries and benefits will tend to have considerable influence in both calculations. Any increase in basic teacher salary and benefits will be mirrored in the cost per student rates for special education. During the same period, the average expense per student with a disability rose from \$9,469 to \$11,161, or 17.9%.

More noteworthy is the enrollment trend in special classes, a more costly setting in which special education services are provided. As noted above, the total number of students with a disability receiving special education services declined from 995 in 2004-05 to 833 in the current year. While enrollment in the resource specialist program and the designated instruction and services mostly showed continuing declines, the enrollment in special day classes declined for two years and then started to grow again.

2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
277	245	249	271

This data suggests that the increasing use of special day classes as an instructional option may well be increasing the cost per student for special education services.

More specific information regarding enhancing the service options will be discussed below.

Administration and Support

Two central office staff supervise special education and pupil personnel services (PPS) for the district. Ninety percent of the director's salary is charged to a special education resource code (6500). The remaining 10% is charged to a non-specified unrestricted resource code (0000). Thus 90% of her salary is charged to special education and 10% to pupil personnel services. The function code for one of her salary code strings is 3110 (counselor) rather than 2100 (supervision). This may be intended to reflect the PPS part of her role in special education.

Despite a job description that specifies a large number of special education activities and responsibilities, FCMAT was given continual assurance by all staff interviewed that the coordinator is primarily involved in behavior issues pertaining to the general school population. However, more than 95% of his salary was charged to special education resource codes 6500 and 3315. Use of resource code 3315 for this position is questionable because these funding streams are restricted for use in providing services to preschoolers. FCMAT could find no specific preschool responsibilities in the coordinator's job description.

This level of administration/supervision for special education and pupil personnel services is somewhat high for a district the size of Santee. There is a need to clarify the administrative/supervisory roles between central administration and site administration.

It is recommended for the district to review roles and responsibilities pertaining to special education and pupil personnel service activities, revise the pertinent job descriptions, and establish realistic staffing ratios with very clear expectations for job performance.

At one time the district had two program specialists, but reduced that responsibility to one position. The employee in that position will be retiring at the end of this school year.

The East County SELPA provides program specialist services in two ways. All program specialist funding is apportioned to the districts based on ADA. The district then has the option to return that funding to the SELPA Administrative Unit (AU) to purchase program specialist services or use that funding to provide its own services. Santee has opted to provide its own program specialist services.

In fiscal year 2006-07, Santee received \$42,868 from the AU and paid the Program Specialist \$97,333 in salary and benefits. The district paid an additional \$54,465, not including operation expenses, for its own Program Specialist. There may be more effective ways to utilize that funding, such as stipends for some personnel to function as regional case carriers. In a separate study completed in March 2008, FCMAT has recommended to the East County SELPA and its constituent districts that they review the concepts of regional versus district-based program specialist services.

The coordinator and the Program Specialist are charged to function code 3110. It would seem more appropriate to charge the coordinator to function code 2100 (program supervision). The Program Specialist should also be charged to function code 2100, given the responsibility for curriculum focus, staff development responsibilities, and appropriate placements.

As with the coordinator, it is inadvisable to charge the Program Specialist to resource code 3315, funds that are restricted for use with preschoolers.

Psychologist Services

The district apportions the cost of school psychologists between an undistributed or unrestricted resource code (0000) and a special education resource code (6500) at the ratio of 60% as a special education activity and 40% as a general education activity. There is no clear rationale for this apportionment. Short of requiring staff to log activity time daily, or sampling the activity time periodically, the district might rely more on the MediCal information that the psychologists submit to estimate the time spent in each area.

Psychological services such as assessment can generate MediCal revenues. In many cases other psychological services, speech therapy services, and occupational therapy services may also generate MediCal reimbursements. While they can't be charged to MediCal (unless they are additions to current staff), they can generate monies for program enhancements. Since FCMAT was assured that the district was generating both MediCal and MAA revenues (and the budget appeared to validate that), it follows that those staff

are submitting MediCal claim information. That information can be used to determine or estimate amounts of time spent on specific activities like assessment and counseling.

With enrollment generally declining, the district may also want to evaluate the staffing level of psychological services it provides.

Transportation

Because Santee operates a relatively small home-to-school transportation system, there is little opportunity to utilize the regular bus routes to transport students with disabilities who require transportation. This results in a proportionately larger program than would be expected, with an additional cost factor. The district may want to request the services of a neighboring transportation director to review this aspect of the program.

The district might also consider offering to pay parents in-lieu transportation costs to transport their own children with disabilities to/from school. While such services may incur no cost to the parent or child, reimbursing the parent for mileage addresses the legal concern. Many districts, particularly in isolated rural areas of California, use this option extensively.

Pre-referral Activities

The district routinely charges staff to special education funds for pre-referral activities such as student assistance teams and Response to Intervention. While these services are very valuable, when these staff members engage in these activities, their staff costs should not be charged as special education costs because they are regular education activities. The funding should come from the unrestricted side of the budget. Pursuant to AB 777, the School-Based Program Coordination Act (see Appendix), the use of special education funded personnel to provide these services and other services for children not identified as disabled is permissible, but special education funds cannot be commingled with other categorical funds. Program delivery models such as learning centers can include the use of special education funded personnel if the model also includes students with a disability and the benefits to students without a disability are an incidental result of that involvement.

Obligatory Support

A continuing concern of district administration and the Governing Board is the reported acceleration in obligatory support by special education on the district's unrestricted general funds. While obligatory support has been a great concern for California's school districts, the revised regulations for IDEA issued in 2006 raise serious question with regard to the extent of obligatory support throughout the state.

Obligatory support is often misunderstood to indicate that one area of education is taking more of the resources than it should to accomplish its purposes. Too often the measurement of obligatory support is simply defined as the difference between the amount the district receives to provide special education services and the amount it spends to provide those services.

Funding for educational services for disabled students comes from two sources:

- the unrestricted funds of the district that are to be used to provide educational services for all students, including students with disabilities, and
- restricted funds from the federal and state governments and from local county property taxes to help pay for the excess costs associated with providing special education services.

The definition of excess cost is clearly stated in federal regulations:

§ 300.16 Excess costs.

Excess costs means those costs that are in excess of the average annual per-student expenditure in an LEA during the preceding school year for an elementary school or secondary school student, as may be appropriate, and that must be computed after deducting—

(a) Amounts received—

- (1) Under Part B of the Act;
- (2) Under Part A of title I of the ESEA; and
- (3) Under Parts A and B of title III of the ESEA and;

(b) Any State or local funds expended for programs that would qualify for assistance under any of the parts described in paragraph (a) of this section, but excluding any amounts for capital outlay or debt service.

(See Appendix A to part 300 for an example of how excess costs must be calculated.)

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1401(8))

By extracting the expenditures from state or local funds (property taxes) before determining the excess cost, the federal regulation essentially restricts state aid to helping pay excess cost. This is essentially what occurred when the state implemented AB 602, the current funding model for special education in California.

Obligatory support, then is not simply the difference between the total cost of providing educational services to disabled students and the federal, state, and local county property taxes received for the excess costs of providing special education. Obligatory support doesn't actually begin to accrue until the total costs of providing educational services to disabled students exceeds the required level of expenditure from the general fund plus the federal, state, and local property tax revenues provided to defray the excess costs associated with special education.

For Santee, the adjusted average per student expenditure in 2006-07 was \$6,079. Santee was serving 848 students with disabilities. Thus, as a group, the students with a disability had the right to have the district spend a total of \$5,154,812 for their education before any excess cost money was expended. This amount is based on the federal requirement that federal special education assistance can only be spent for the excess costs of services

to students with disabilities. The revised regulations for IDEA, issued in 2006, contain a process for determining when the required level of local support is attained and excess costs begin to accrue.

CASEMIS requires that the percentage of time in general educational settings be reported for each student. By accumulating those full-time student equivalents into a composite whole, the result would determine the number of students receiving services in general education settings. For example, there are 10 students with disabilities in the Resource Specialist Program. Each one, according to the CASEMIS data, spends 80% of their time in general education settings. That is equivalent to eight students. Multiply eight students by the \$6,079 per student expenditure cited above and it will show that \$48,632 of the required expenditures from unrestricted funds are being spent for students with disabilities in general education settings. The remaining \$12,158 of the required expenditure for those 10 students paid for special education services. Any costs over this total of \$60,790 would be excess costs. If the excess cost revenues are less than these additional costs, then the difference must be expended from the unrestricted funds and obligatory support has occurred.

The enhancements that might result in a more cost-effective and beneficial special education delivery system are discussed below. The district has not been effectively tracking student information to determine the costs of educating identified special education students in the general education classroom. By calculating the costs of serving special education students in general education and comparing these costs to serving students in the special education classroom, the district will be able to determine more effectively the actual costs of educating identified special education students. Utilizing the CASEMIS data more effectively will assist the district in a more effective cost analysis of special education expenditures and identifying needed student data for reporting purposes.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Continue its effort to improve school attendance. With declining enrollment, every effort to increase attendance will pay fiscal dividends to the district and result in improved educational opportunities for the students.
2. Continue and expand early intervention activities to achieve greater benefit for at-risk students and avoid the necessity for special education services.
3. Review its procedures for determining program placements for students with disabilities, develop strategies to make alternative placements more responsive to individual student needs, and develop criteria and a rubric for determining the appropriateness of placement in a special class. This will enhance the least restrictive alternatives for these students and reduce the population requiring this more expensive setting.

4. Review the roles and responsibilities of the Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services and the Coordinator of Special Education and Student Behavior. Review and revise the job descriptions. Evaluate the effectiveness of the current structure and consider dispersing some administrative/coordinating activities into regions and/or to the site level administration.
5. Re-evaluate the resource, goal, and function codes used for some staff to better reflect their activities.
6. Reconsider receiving program specialist services from the Administrative Unit and using the savings for regional coordinators, case managers or parent liaisons.
7. Reconsider the psychological services staffing level and develop a means to more accurately identify the scope of activity to better code the expenditures for these services.
8. Consider asking a transportation supervisor from a neighboring district to help evaluate the cost-effectiveness of the transportation operation.
9. Consider offering parents the option of an in-lieu transportation reimbursement for transporting their child to and from school.
10. Consider use of the School-Based Program Coordination Act provisions to attempt to make the educational opportunities for students with disabilities more effective in less restrictive settings. Develop effective early intervention strategies for students at risk.
11. Develop a more accurate student data system that can provide information at any time of year regarding the location of its students served outside the district, the students it serves from other districts, each teacher's class size, each resource specialist's caseload, and the caseloads (both unduplicated and duplicated) of all designated instruction and services personnel.
12. Consider using MediCal reporting data to develop estimates of time that pupil personnel and health services personnel spend on special education related activities to allow an appropriate accounting of their salaries and benefits.
13. Develop a methodology for use in budget development through which the district can calculate its required level of expenditures for providing educational services to students with disabilities, the portion of that amount that is expended to provide educational services in general education settings, and the degree to which excess costs are encroaching on the general funds.
14. Develop a system utilizing CASEMIS data to determine the costs to serve identified special education students in the regular classroom setting, and compare these actual costs with educating students in the special education classroom.

Fiscal Efficiency

As noted above, enrollment in Santee School District has declined over the past seven years. During this time, the district has continued to identify between 13% and 14% of its students for special education and related services each year. This exceeds the statewide average of 11.4%. Placements in special day classroom settings have increased in recent years.

When districts exceed the statewide average for enrollment in special education it is helpful to carefully analyze data available through the California Special Education Management Information System (CASEMIS). One of the strengths of the CASEMIS reporting system is its ability to track changes in district enrollment by disability over a seven-year period. For this study, FCMAT studied the trends of disability areas from December 2001 to December 2007. The data illustrated in the table below indicates a shift in the special education population in the district, with increases in the number of students with autism and a decrease in the areas of speech and language impaired (SLI), specific learning disability (SLD) and orthopedically impaired (OI).

Special Education Annual Data Comparison Report (CASEMIS) 2001-2007							
	Dec. 2001	Dec. 2002	Dec. 2003	Dec. 2004	Dec. 2005	Dec. 2006	Dec. 2007
Speech/Language Impaired	574	573	549	539	516	480	449
Specific Learning Disability	264	252	219	214	185	165	185
*Orthopedically Impaired	27	21	20	16	18	13	9
Autism	21	20	31	23	25	26	33

*Changes in the area of Orthopedically Impaired are unique to the Santee district; the other changes are consistent with statewide trends.

The data verifies that despite the decrease in student enrollment in the district and special education, the incidence of autism has significantly increased. Increases in this disability area require intensive and costly programming. The number of students with specific learning disabilities has decreased. Both the increase in autism and the decrease in specific learning disabilities are consistent with changes statewide. Despite the significant changes in these two disability areas, the district's program structure has remained the same over the last seven years. Students continue to be served in traditional special day class and resource specialist models. There are no specialized classes for students with autism. The only evident change has been an increase in the use of 1:1 instructional aides for classroom support. During the 2007-08 school year 3% of the students in special

education required 1:1 instructional aides at an approximate cost of \$550,000. Data provided by the district indicates that 45% of the students needing 1:1 instructional aide support are students with autism. Although there is little comparative data available on the increasing trends in the use of 1:1 instructional aides over previous years, the staff voiced concern over the increasing use of these aides. The district has a comprehensive policy for assessing the need for a 1:1 aide but has no clear process for phasing out the service to transition students to maximum independent functioning. The assessment/need determination process is inconsistently employed throughout the district.

To gain a better understanding of the special education program, FCMAT reviewed the district's Student Assistance Team (SAT) process and instructional delivery model. The district's well-defined SAT process is clearly a function of general education. Observations in five district schools showed that the procedures are well articulated across the district. Parents are active participants and can engage in brainstorming sessions with the team. Each student's action plan contains defined strategies to address concerns, including time lines and the responsible staff. This very viable process is designed as a pre-referral intervention, although some inconsistencies exist from school to school. District-wide intervention (beyond the typical classroom) and school-wide accommodations are limited.

Many special education and pupil personnel staff members participate in SAT meetings (general education teachers, language arts specialists, principals, psychologists etc.) This time is charged as a special education expense although the services are not directly related to providing services to a child identified as having a disability. Correct coding of these charges would reduce special education costs and the level of maintenance of fiscal effort that is required under federal law.

The district may not be maximizing available resources such as the MAA, MediCal and AB 602 funding allocations. Six or seven teachers may retire at the end of the school year, which could save the district as much as \$150,000 to \$175,000 for the 2008-09 school year if retired teachers are replaced by newly credentialed ones.

Parents and staff perceive that the special day class sizes are too large. However, special day classes fall well within the statewide staffing benchmarks developed by School Services of California (SSC):

Disability	School Services of Calif.	Santee School District
Severely Handicapped	10-12 students, 2 aides	10 students, 2 aides
Nonseverely Handicapped	12 students, 1 aide	12 students, 1.2 aides

The district does not have specific eligibility and exit criteria for the various disabilities. Each disability area should have criteria to guide the process from the selection of appropriate assessment instruments and strategies to determining educational need and

eligibility for special education services. Similar criteria should be developed for various program aspects: transportation, extended year services, and individual related services (speech, adaptive physical education, occupational therapy, etc.).

Specific eligibility criteria and the procedure for developing and implementing transition plans should be developed to determine when a given disability no longer appears to require special education services and to assist in accomplishing a smooth transition from special education to general education.

The adaptive physical education program seems somewhat heavily staffed for a district of this size. Adaptive physical education should only be necessary when the student cannot effectively participate in general physical education with or without some modifications, or a specially designed physical education program as commonly found in special classes. Adaptive physical education is individually tailored to meet the specific needs generated by the child's disability.

The recommended caseload ratio for school psychologists to general education students is 1:1,596. The district's ratio is 1:1,324. Using the recommended caseload ratio, a position could be reduced to align with recommended guidelines. The reduction of one psychologist position would save the district up to \$80,000. With the retirement of a full-time program specialist, the district should consider split funding for this position. The district also maintains two full-time administrators for special education and pupil personnel. Given the declining enrollment, the FTE of these two positions should be evaluated for efficiency and cost effectiveness.

The negotiated contract with the certificated employees includes language that appears to have been misinterpreted through the years. Article XV, Section B, Lines 25-27 of the contract states:

The District and school psychologists may mutually agree to extend the school psychologists' work year up to ten (10) additional days. Pay for additional days shall be at daily rate as per Article XV "Salary Provisions," A. "Salary Schedule," page 53.

This, or very similar language, is common in many negotiated agreements. Generally, it provides for the district to enter into an individual negotiation with a bargaining unit member (in this case, a school psychologist) regarding a longer work year than is established for unit members.

Based on staff interviews, this language seems to require the district to approve requests for additional work hours on weekdays and/or weekends and/or holidays. The supervisor is under the impression that she is unable to deny such requests, which seems to be an unintended outcome of this wording.

Generally, this wording would permit the district to offer one or more school psychologists a longer work year to address certain pressing issues. The school psychologist(s) could agree to or reject the request outside of the negotiating process. In this case, however, the wording pluralizes the word “psychologist” and seems to suggest that the district could not mutually agree with one or two school psychologists for the long work year, but would have to mutually agree with all of the school psychologists. This would suggest a mini-negotiating arrangement with one segment of the bargaining unit: the school psychologists. It is doubtful this was the intent of either party when this language was adopted.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Reduce the need to identify children with learning and behavioral needs for special education and adopt research supported by IDEA and NCLB to ensure that students receive:
 - a. Scientifically based early reading programs
 - b. Positive behavioral interventions and supports
 - c. Early intervening services that can include intervention strands with short-term measurable remediation aimed at preventing more restrictive placements and services.
2. Expand participation on the district reading intervention committee to include special education teachers.
3. Ensure that the district’s model standard for SAT teams is carried out consistently across the district by gathering parent input about their experience and objective observations with feedback to staff on the integrity of the process.
4. Closely monitor the use of 1:1 instructional aides and annual costs. Adhere to the district procedures on identifying the need for a 1:1 instructional aide. Ensure that there is definition to the duration and process for phasing out this level of service.
5. Reduce special education costs and the level of maintenance of effort by changing the coding of general education members of the SAT team to general education.
6. Review and, as necessary, develop or revise eligibility criteria and assessment procedures for each disability area and each related or support service.
7. Review the current adaptive physical education program to ensure that it focuses primarily on addressing the needs of students requiring individualized physical education programs.
8. Review psychologist, special education administrator and pupil personnel administrator staffing levels for efficiency and cost effectiveness.
9. Expand program options to include specialized classes for students with autism.

10. Consider developing a sequence for classes for the emotionally disturbed that ranges from K-3 and another from 4-5.
11. Explore ways to maximize available resources such as MAA and MediCal.
12. Analyze and implement savings with teacher retirement and replacement staff.
13. Consider increasing the ratio of psychologists to general education students to align with the recommendation from School Services.
14. Clarify the language with regard to the school psychologists' work year to reflect the intent to allow the district and individual psychologists to mutually agree to the addition of workdays before the start and/or after the end of the work year.



Program Delivery

The options for special education service delivery are limited to the resource specialist program, special day class and designated instruction services. There is also a limited range of intervention options for general education students who struggle with the curriculum despite classroom accommodations. These limited options could explain why there is an overreliance on special education as the option for more intensive remedial assistance and why the identification rate for special education has remained between 13% and 14%. In addition, the number of students in special day classes increased by 18 in 2007-08.

There are several ways to ensure that students receive the instructional support they need through the use of collaborative models of teaching in the general education setting. The district has explored but not fully implemented collaborative models. The special education department has a separate defined curriculum for special education students with little or no integration into the curriculum used in general education. There are several ways to ensure that students get the instructional support they need through the following collaborative models:

Collaborative Models for Special Education Students	
The Lead Teacher Model	The general education teacher delivers the instruction in a specific subject area. The special education teacher is an observer who works with children after instruction to provide specially designed instruction, ensure understanding, and provide adaptations and modifications.
The Learning Center Model	Each teacher is assigned to the Learning Center for instruction in a specific area of the room. Students rotate through the Learning Center for instruction. Special education and general education teachers and instructional aides work side by side in instructional delivery and support.
Team Teaching	Both teachers work simultaneously to teach a classroom of students. The teacher with the necessary background knowledge in content areas presents new concepts and materials. Both teachers work as a team to reinforce learning and provide assistance to students as needed. The primary focus is on the general education curriculum.

Collaborative Models for Special Education Students	
Consultation Model	A special education teacher may provide some instruction to students, but the model is built on indirect service. The special education teacher provides guidance to the general education teacher on strategies to modify instruction to meet students' needs. This is generally a good transition model for students ready to exit special education.
Resource Room Model	Traditional pull out with specialized instruction occurs one-to-one or in small groups with a special education teacher. This is the model currently used in the district. It relies on specialized research-based curriculum selected by the special education department.

Despite visits to the Elk Grove Unified School District and the intent to implement a neverstreaming model, the district has had limited success in making this transition. Elk Grove is a significantly larger district than Santee and has been able to organize the necessary resources to enhance the effectiveness of that model. It might be worthwhile to review the delivery model being successfully implemented in the Hesperia Unified School District in San Bernardino County.

General Education/Special Education Collaboration

General education teachers are not always aware that a student has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) until mid year. This results in compliance issues, and student progress is impeded because no special education services have been provided. Even when general education teachers know that the student has an IEP, they may be unaware of the specific disability and its impact on learning in the general curriculum, or the goals and objectives on the IEP. General education teachers need training in crisis behavior management to ensure student and staff safety.

Coordination between general and special education on curriculum issues appears to be limited. Successful collaboration models require strong leadership, knowledge and experience in the general education curriculum as well as the special education curriculum, insight into viable strategies for general education accommodations and effective measures of curriculum based student achievement already used in general education. As the district redesigns its program delivery model in special education, consideration should be given to a combined leadership model between special education and general education administration in the department. This will provide a unique balance of curriculum and methodology to ensure success for students with disabilities in the general education setting.

Special education has a defined curriculum selected by the special education leadership with no involvement by general education staff. General education teachers would like opportunities to offer input into appropriate curriculum choices, which will help students in the transition to the general education curriculum. Special education teachers may have had to wait a few weeks for the necessary teacher editions and support materials for the district-adopted curriculum, and lack the necessary training in teaching reading. Teachers feel pressured by special education administration to reduce the resource specialist program numbers and release students from special education into 504 plans. The special education exit criteria are unclear, with no system in place to effectively monitor students' achievements in the general education setting.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Provide training for special education and general education teachers to ensure a common understanding about IEP content, purpose, disability and goals and their relationship to learning in the general education environment.
2. Develop a procedure to ensure that general education teachers are fully informed about the IEP of each student assigned to their classroom.
3. Develop policies and procedures to ensure that monitoring of individual progress for special education students is in place and is consistently reported to parents.
4. Ensure that special education teachers and students have equal access to general education curriculum.
5. Redefine the curriculum adoption process for special education with better alignment and input from general education.
6. Include special education teachers in professional learning communities.
7. Provide training for general education teachers in managing crisis behavior in the classroom.
8. Develop reading and service delivery models that effectively monitor student achievement and drive classroom instruction.
9. Consider designing a district wide collaborative model where:
 - a. All staff accept responsibility for learning outcomes of students with disabilities
 - b. Parents are aware of and support program goals
 - c. Special education teachers are part of the instructional planning team and are committed to collaborative practice
 - d. Teachers have the knowledge and skills needed to select and adapt curriculum and instructional methods
 - e. Teachers create a cooperative learning environment and promote socialization
 - f. A variety of instructional interventions are available.

10. Consider restructuring the leadership roles of the newly redesigned collaborative model by combining the expertise of a general and a special education administrator. Consider accomplishing this by restructuring the administrative resources in the PPS and Special Education departments.
11. Provide training for special education teachers in teaching reading, with a solid foundation in the district-adopted reading programs and support materials.

Parent Communication

In interviews, about one-third of the parents stated that they must push for the necessary special education and support services. Most of the parents interviewed do not feel that they are equal partners in the IEP process. Parents who are new to special education stated that they were confused by the IEP and documentation process. There is no clear system for communicating the range of options available. Parents rely on other parents to inform them of these options and how to obtain them for their children.

Instances were reported where district staff have advised parents “off the record” regarding 1:1 instructional aide support. Parents and staff are confused regarding where and how to resolve special education issues. A district liaison position should be considered to orient parents and assist them in understanding and navigating the system. The district should consider developing options that include parents as partners in the special education process, provide opportunities for support groups and orientation for parents new to the system. Parents need a mechanism to provide input to the district regarding special education issues, such as the advisory group/PTA that exists in the Poway Unified School District.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Establish a district-level community advisory committee for parents of students with disabilities that provides support and the opportunity to serve as an advisory group to the district on special education issues.
2. Establish a Parent Facilitator position to orient parents and assist them in navigating the IEP process.
3. Develop support groups in specific disability areas such as autism to provide parents with an important linkage to share resources and problem-solve.
4. Develop a volunteer mentoring program where experienced parents can assist in the orientation of parents new to the district or to special education.
5. Design a welcome kit for parents new to the special education process, with critical information to assist parents in navigating the IEP process.
6. Establish clear lines of communication with the district staff on how to get special education issues resolved

7. Provide training for parents and staff on the IEP process, responsibilities and roles.
8. Create a web page for special education parents with resources and key parent information.
9. Send a satisfaction survey to parents following an IEP meeting to gather feedback and make necessary adjustments to ensure effective communication.
10. Create an annual survey and distribute to all stakeholders. Summarize and share results on the district Web site as part of the district's accountability report card.

Centralized Programming in a Decentralized District

There is a conflict of leadership roles and responsibilities between the special education program and the school sites. Little collaboration occurs between site administrators and special education leadership on curriculum, program development and delivery. It is unclear whether the site or district is responsible for the special education instructional supply budget. There is confusion over whether the site or special education is responsible for test protocols for students assessed for special education. Assessment is within the roles and responsibility of special education, so all test protocols for initial assessments should be provided by the special education department. A reduction in the program specialist position charged with case management of special day class students has reduced the quality of individual case management. It appears that appropriate replacement strategies were not implemented, impeding effective communication between IEP members, district and site staff. As a result of declining enrollment, critical elements of the IEP case management process were reassigned to schools; however, critical elements of that process were missed and perhaps not monitored by the district, such as timely notification to teachers on new class placements, progress charting and goal selection.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the site vs. district staff regarding special education.
2. Establish a standardized approach to providing supply and support budgets to special education staff at the sites.
3. Clearly define the role of special education in the assessment process as outlined in IDEA.
4. Establish intake procedures for new students.

Professional Development

The district's special day class teachers have limited professional development opportunities. While resource specialists and speech pathologists are released during the contract day to attend job-alike groups for training and support, special day class teachers in severe and nonsevere classes have no such opportunity. Training needs include educating IEP team members on the options available for special education students; crisis intervention strategies for general education teachers; reading, math and language arts strategies for special education teachers; and training for principals on the IEP process and team decision-making.

The assessment process used to identify students with a disability focuses too heavily on eligibility considerations and lacks sufficient focus on accruing information that can be used to improve the student's educational performance. Student assessments should be undertaken with the intent to learn as much about the child's learning attributes as possible to identify the strategies and interventions that will improve his/her learning capacity. Only with those outcomes in mind will information be derived that is useful to the student and the staff responsible for providing education services. With that information it can be readily determined whether the disability requires special education services and the most effective means of providing the services. If special education services are not warranted, it is incumbent upon the assessment team to provide the general education personnel with information and recommendations they can employ to improve the child's educational benefits.

Further training is needed on the diagnostic and prescriptive assessments available to improve student performance in the general education setting regardless of special education eligibility. All staff need training on special education laws and requirements.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Create opportunities for special day class teachers to access necessary training through job-alike work groups during the contract day.
2. Provide training opportunities and articulation with principals, general education and special education staff on the IEP process and the range of options for special education programs and services.
3. Provide training for general education teachers in behavior management and crisis intervention.
4. Provide training to the assessment teams to improve their educational diagnostic/prescription competency and their ability to provide useful information to those charged with educating the child, whether in general or special education.

5. Require training in reading, math and language arts strategies for special education teachers.
6. Train all staff on the federal and state laws and legal requirements.

Interdepartmental Communication

There appears to be limited coordination between the special education, human resources and business departments. Greater efficiency can be attained between the human resources and special education departments by implementing effective position control that directly links staffing to budget development. This is particularly true with regard to the addition of instructional aide positions throughout the school year. Collaborative development, monitoring and revision of budgets among all three departments would decrease the impact of unanticipated expenses during the course of the school year.

School modernization and construction projects do not consider the potential requirements of special education until well into the activity, if at all.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Establish quarterly meetings between the business and special education departments to monitor/revise the special education budget.
2. Ensure that the special education department is actively involved in the development of the special education budget each year.
3. Review the budget and expenditures for special education with the principals at least annually.
4. Formalize interdepartmental communication to discuss position control for effective staffing with the Human Resources, Business Services, and Special Education departments.
5. Provide the school board with an annual report on special education to review costs and highlight program development, student achievement and parent involvement.
6. Include special education needs in planning or remodeling facilities, implementing major technology strategies, and other major undertakings that may impact the delivery of special education services.



Appendices

Appendix A - Assembly Bill 777

Appendix B - Study Agreement

Appendix A

SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAM COORDINATION ACT (AB 777)

52850. The provisions of this article shall apply only to school districts and schools which participate in school-based coordinated categorical programs pursuant to this article. No school may operate pursuant to this article unless a newly developed plan or a revision of the previously approved plan has been approved by the local governing board and is retained at the school site. These plans shall be available to the Superintendent of Public Instruction upon request and shall be made available to the public on a reasonable basis pursuant to the provisions of the California Public Records Act, Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 6250) of Division 7 of Title 1 of the Government **Code**.

52851. (a) A school district and school may apply to receive funds allocated pursuant to Article 4 (commencing with Section 8750) of Chapter 4 of Part 6, Article 5 (commencing with Section 44520) of Chapter 3 and Article 1 (commencing with Section 44670) of Chapter 3.1 of Part 25, Article 15 (commencing with Section 51870) of Chapter 5, Chapter 6 (commencing with Section 52000), Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 52200), and Article 2 (commencing with Section 52340) of Chapter 9 of this part, Chapter 1 (commencing with Section 54000) and Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 54100) of Part 29, and Part 30 (commencing with Section 56000), and Chapter 1 (commencing with Section 500) of Part 2 of Division 2 of the Military and Veterans **Code**, without complying with the provisions of those statutes or the related California Administrative **Code** regulations, provided that the school and school district meet the criteria established in this article.

(b) In no event shall subdivision (a) be construed to include bilingual **education** programs established pursuant to Article 3 (commencing with Section 52160) of Chapter 7 within the provisions of this article.

52852. A schoolsite council shall be established at each school which participates in school-based program coordination. The council shall be composed of the principal and representatives of: teachers selected by teachers at the school; other school personnel selected by other school personnel at the school; parents of pupils attending

the school selected by such parents; and, in secondary schools, pupils selected by pupils attending the school.

At the elementary level the council shall be constituted to ensure parity between (a) the principal, classroom teachers and other school personnel; and (b) parents or other community members selected by parents.

At the secondary level the council shall be constituted to ensure parity between (a) the principal, classroom teachers and other school personnel; and (b) equal numbers of parents, or other community members selected by parents, and pupils.

At both the elementary and secondary levels, classroom teachers shall comprise the majority of persons represented under category (a).

Existing schoolwide advisory groups or school support groups may be utilized as the schoolsite council if those groups conform to this section.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall provide several examples of selection and replacement procedures that may be considered by schoolsite councils.

An employee of a school who is also a parent or guardian of a pupil who attends a school other than the school of the parent's or guardian's employment, is not disqualified by virtue of this employment from serving as a parent representative on the schoolsite council established for the school that his or her child or ward attends.

52852.5. The governing board of each school district shall:

(a) Ensure that the principal of every school receives information covering the provisions of this article, and provides such information to teachers, other school personnel, parents, and, in secondary schools, pupils.

(b) Adopt policies to ensure that, prior to a school beginning to develop a plan pursuant to Section 52853, a school site council as described in Section 52852 is established at the school site to consider whether or not it wishes the local school to participate in the school-based coordination program. The board shall ensure that all interested persons, including, but not limited to, the principal, teachers, other school personnel, parents, and, in secondary schools, pupils have an opportunity to meet in public to establish the council.

(c) Ensure that funds coordinated pursuant to this article are used to supplement, not supplant, existing state and local fiscal efforts and that schools which receive the funds shall have base expenditures comparable to nonparticipating schools.

52853. (a) The schoolsite council shall develop a school plan which shall include all of the following:

- (1) Curricula, instructional strategies and materials responsive to the individual needs and learning styles of each pupil.
- (2) Instructional and auxiliary services to meet the special needs of non-English-speaking or limited-English-speaking pupils, including instruction in a language these pupils understand; educationally disadvantaged pupils; gifted and talented pupils; and pupils with exceptional needs.
- (3) A staff development program for teachers, other school personnel, paraprofessionals, and volunteers, including those participating in special programs. Staff development programs may include the use of program guidelines that have been developed by the superintendent for specific learning disabilities, including dyslexia, and other related disorders. The strategies included in the guidelines and instructional materials that focus on successful approaches for working with pupils who have been prenatally substance exposed, as well as other at-risk pupils, may also be provided to teachers.
- (4) Ongoing evaluation of the educational program of the school.
- (5) Other activities and objectives as established by the council.

(6) The proposed expenditures of funds available to the school through the programs described in Section 52851. For purposes of this subdivision, proposed expenditures of funds available to the school through the programs described in Section 52851 shall include, but not be limited to, salaries and staff benefits for persons providing services for those programs.

(7) The proposed expenditure of funds available to the school through the federal Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (IASA) (20 U.S.C. Sec. 6301 et seq.) and its amendments. If the school operates a state-approved schoolwide program pursuant to Section 6314 of Title 20 of the United States **Code** in a manner consistent with the expenditure of funds available to the school pursuant to Section 52851, employees of the schoolwide program may be deemed funded by a single cost objective.

(b) The schoolsite council shall annually review the school plan, establish a new budget, and if necessary, make other modifications in the plan to reflect changing needs and priorities.

52855. The school district governing board shall review and approve or disapprove school plans. A school plan shall not be approved unless it was developed and recommended by the school site council. If a plan is not approved by the governing board, specific reasons

for that action shall be communicated to the council. Modifications to any school plan shall be developed, recommended and approved or disapproved in the same manner.

52856. If the school district and school choose to include within the provisions of this article funds allocated pursuant to Chapter 6 (commencing with Section 52000), the school district and school shall still be eligible to compete for any expansion funding that is made available for the school improvement program for grades in that school which are not already generating funds.

52857. The district governing board shall determine the portion of the district's grant pursuant to Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 52200) of Part 28 that shall be allocated to the school for inclusion in the school budget developed pursuant to subdivision (f) of Section 52853.

52858. (a) If the school district and school choose to include within the provisions of this article, funds allocated pursuant to Chapter 1 (commencing with Section 54000) of Part 29, the school district shall: (a) if the number of educationally disadvantaged pupils in the school is less than 75 percent of the school's enrollment, ensure that there is state and local funding in the school available for allocation pursuant to subdivision (f) of Section 52853 which is equal to or greater than the per pupil amount allocated to that school per disadvantaged pupil through the economic impact aid program multiplied times 75 percent of the school's enrollment, (b) continue to maintain any school or district advisory committees required pursuant to Chapter 1, and (c) continue to distribute funds to schools in accordance with Sections 54004.3, 54004.5, and 54004.7 and regulations adopted which pertain to those sections.

(b) To the extent permitted by federal law, such that funds allocated pursuant to Article 1 (commencing with Section 54000) of Chapter 1 of Part 29 are deemed by the United States Department of **Education** to be comparable to funds allocated pursuant to Chapter I of the Educational Consolidation and Improvement Act, the percentage limitation and multiplier established in subdivision (a) may be decreased to not less than 67 percent.

52858.5. If the school district and school site council choose to include funds allocated pursuant to Chapter 1 (commencing with Section 54000) of Part 29, the school site council shall consult with any school level bilingual advisory committee required by law prior

to submitting a school plan pursuant to this article.

If the bilingual advisory committee objects to the plan, written copies of the committee's objections shall be attached to the plan when it is transmitted to the local governing board and the State Board of **Education**.

However, the school site council and the school district shall make the final determination as to the content of the school plan and the content of any waiver request.

52859. (a) If a school district and school choose to include within the provisions of this article funds allocated pursuant to Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 54100) of Part 29, the school district and school shall annually receive funding at the rate per specialist allocated statewide multiplied times the number of specialists approved for that school at the time it was approved to operate programs pursuant to this article, shall use these funds to employ a reading specialist who meets the criteria established pursuant to Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 54100) of Part 29, and shall comply with Section 54123.

(b) In no event shall funds coordinated pursuant to this article be used to pay for the local share of costs associated with the employment of reading specialists funded pursuant to this section.

52860. If a school district and school choose to include within the provisions of this article funds allocated pursuant to Part 30 (commencing with Section 56000), the school district shall comply with all requirements of that part, with the following exceptions:

(a) Resource specialist program services, designated instruction and services, and team teaching for special day classes, except special day classes operating pursuant to Section 56364.1, may be provided to pupils who have not been identified as individuals with exceptional needs, provided that all identified individuals with exceptional needs are appropriately served and a description of the services is included in the schoolsite plan.

(b) Programs for individuals with exceptional needs shall be under the direction of credentialed special **education** personnel, but services may be provided entirely by personnel not funded by special **education** moneys, provided that all services specified in the individualized **education** program are received by the pupil.

52861. If a school district and school choose to include within the provisions of this article funds allocated pursuant to Article 4 (commencing with Section 8750) of Chapter 4 of Part 6, Article 5 (commencing with Section 44520) of Chapter 3 of Part 25, Article 15

(commencing with Section 51870) of Chapter 5 and Article 2 (commencing with Section 52340) of Chapter 9 of this part, and Chapter 1 (commencing with Section 500) of Part 2 of Division 2 of the Military and Veterans **Code**, the district shall determine the portion of the district's grants, pursuant to those provisions, which shall be allocated to the school for inclusion in the school budget developed pursuant to subdivision (f) of Section 52853.

52862. School districts and schools that choose to operate programs pursuant to Article 3 (commencing with Section 52850) shall insure compliance with all requirements of federal law.

52863. Any governing board, on behalf of a school site council, may request the State Board of **Education** to grant a waiver of any provision of this article. The State Board of **Education** may grant a request when it finds that the failure to do so would hinder the implementation or maintenance of a successful school-based coordinated program.

If the State Board of **Education** approves a waiver request, the waiver shall apply only to the school or schools which requested the waiver and shall be effective for no more than two years. The State Board of **Education** may renew a waiver request.

Appendix B



FISCAL CRISIS & MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM
STUDY AGREEMENT
February 14, 2008

The FISCAL CRISIS AND MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM (FCMAT), hereinafter referred to as the Team, and the Santee 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 Santee 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 study team will conduct on-site interviews and review extensive documentation related to program policies, practices, and procedures. The team will identify findings to confirm current practices, develop conclusions on the impact of these practices, and provide recommendations for potential changes.

The scope and objectives of this study are to:

- 1) Conduct a review of the District's Special Education program to enable the district to better understand if there are ways to enhance the instructional delivery model for students and the processes for communication with parents.

Provide recommendations for enhancing special education programs, as needed.

- 2) Analyze the District's Special Education revenues and expenditures in order to validate if the district is maximizing available resources through cost effective and appropriate service delivery models. Program costs have increased above available funding at about a 2% increase over the last five years in spite of an average 3% decline in overall student enrollment in the district.

Provide recommendations to maximize resources including options for alternative services and solutions.

- 3) Involve district teaching, classified, administrative staff, and parents in providing information to the team about the nature and benefits of the District's special education programs.

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.

- 7) Follow-Up Support – Six months after the completion of the study, FCMAT will return to the District, if requested, to confirm the District’s progress in implementing the recommendations included in the report, at no costs. Status of the recommendations will be documented to the District in a FCMAT Management Letter.

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. Bill Gillaspie, FCMAT Management Analyst
- B. Two FCMAT Special Education Consultants

Other equally qualified consultants will be substituted in the event one of the above noted individuals is 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 the total cost of the study is estimated at \$10,000. 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:	April, 2008
Staff Interviews:	to be determined
Exit Interviews:	to be determined
Preliminary Report Submitted:	to be determined
Final Report Submitted:	to be determined
Board Presentation:	to be determined
Follow-Up Support:	If requested

7. CONTACT PERSON

Please print name of contact person: Lisbeth Johnson, Superintendent
 Telephone 619 258-2304 FAX
 Internet Address ljohnson@santee.k12.ca.us

 Lisbeth Johnson, Superintendent Date
 Santee School District

Barbara Dean

 Barbara Dean, Deputy Administrative Officer Date
 Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team

February 14, 2008

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.

