



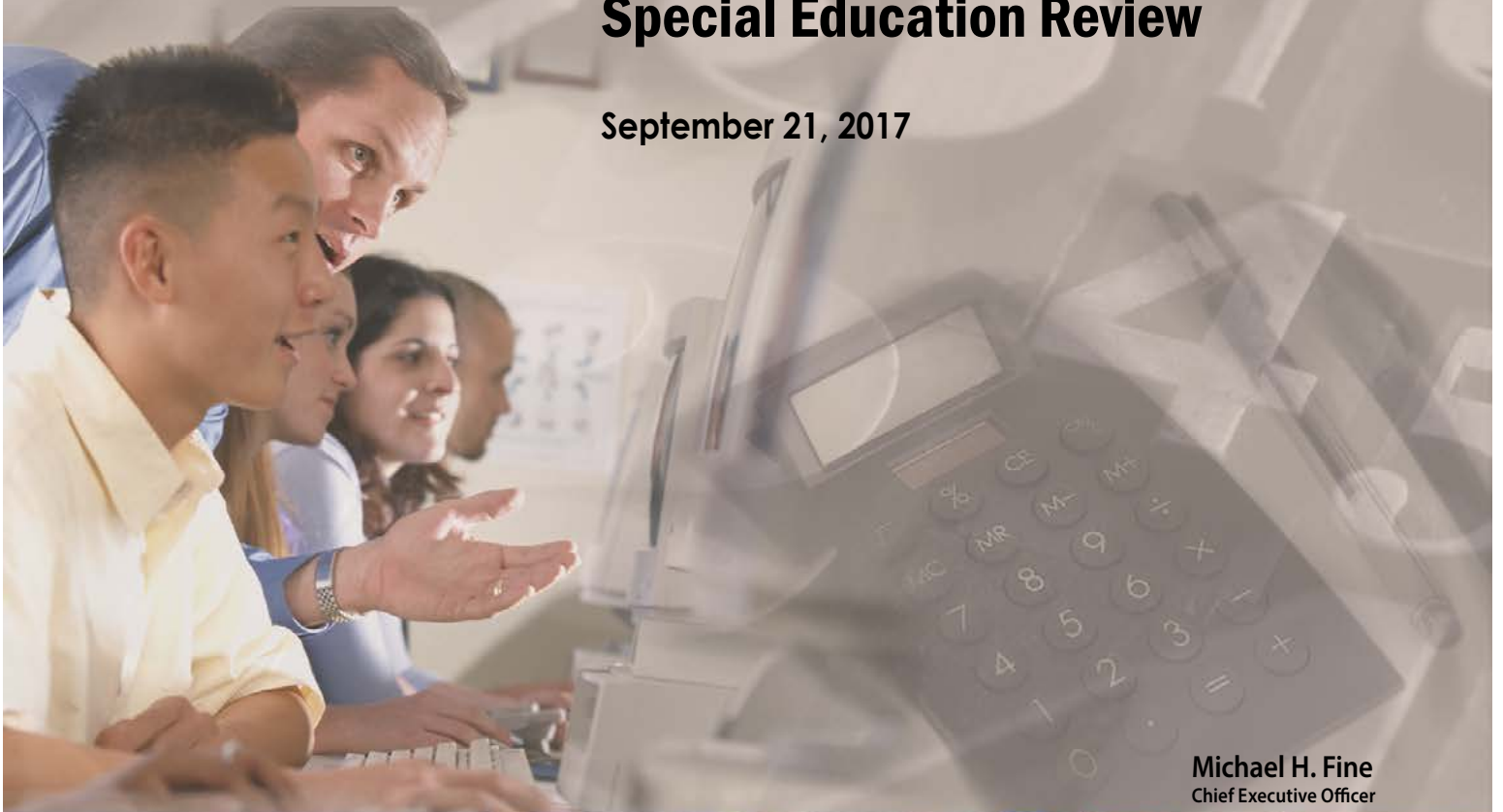
FISCAL CRISIS & MANAGEMENT
ASSISTANCE TEAM

CSIS California School Information Services

Jurupa Unified School District

Special Education Review

September 21, 2017



Michael H. Fine
Chief Executive Officer





CSIS California School Information Services

September 21, 2017

Elliott Duchon, Superintendent
Jurupa Unified School District
4850 Pedley Rd.
Jurupa Valley, CA 92509

Dear Superintendent Duchon,

In December 2016, the Jurupa Unified School District and the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) entered into an agreement for a review of the district's special education services. Specifically, the agreement stated that FCMAT would perform the following:

1. Review the district's implementation of Student Success Teams, Response to Intervention, and Multi-Tiered System of Supports, and make recommendations for improvement, if any.
2. Analyze special education teacher staffing ratios and class and caseload sizes using statutory requirements for mandated services and statewide guidelines, and make recommendations for improvement, if any.
3. Review the efficiency of staffing allocations of special education paraeducators, including classroom and 1-to-1 paraeducators, and make recommendations for improvement, if any. Review the procedures for identifying the need for paraeducators and the processes for monitoring the assignments of paraeducators and determining the need for continued support from year to year.
4. Analyze staffing and caseloads for related service providers including, but not limited to, speech pathologists, psychologists, occupational/physical therapists, behavior specialists, adaptive physical education, and other staff who provide designated instructional services (DIS), and make recommendations for improvement, if any.
5. Determine whether the district is overidentifying students as eligible for special education services compared to the statewide average, and make recommendations that will reduce over identification, if needed.
6. Analyze whether the district provides a continuum of special education and related services for students from preschool through age 22, including student place-

FCMAT

Michael H. Fine, Chief Executive Officer

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ments in the least restrictive environments, and make recommendations for improvement, if any.

7. Review the organizational structure and staffing of the special education department in the district's central office to determine whether its clerical and administrative support, programs and functions are aligned with those of districts of comparable size and structure, and make recommendations for greater efficiencies, if needed.
8. Review the district's unrestricted general fund contribution to special education and make recommendations for greater efficiency, if any.

This final report contains the study team's findings and recommendations. FCMAT appreciates the opportunity to serve the Jurupa Unified School District and extends thanks to all the staff for their assistance during fieldwork.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael H. Fine". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael H. Fine
Chief Executive Officer

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About FCMAT

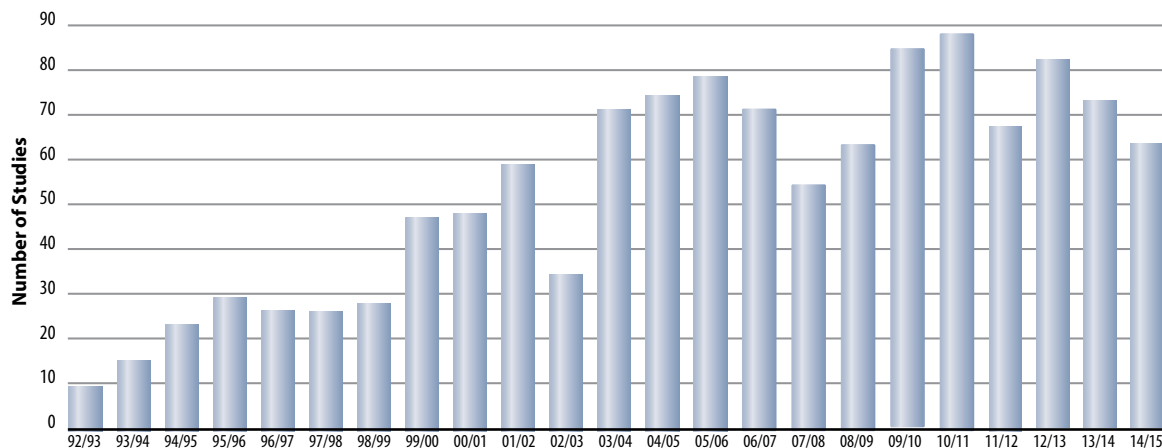
FCMAT's primary mission is to assist California's local K-14 educational agencies to identify, prevent, and resolve financial, human resources and data management challenges. FCMAT provides fiscal and data management assistance, professional development training, product development and other related school business and data services. FCMAT's fiscal and management assistance services are used not just to help avert fiscal crisis, but to promote sound financial practices, support the training and development of chief business officials and help to create efficient organizational operations. FCMAT's data management services are used to help local educational agencies (LEAs) meet state reporting responsibilities, improve data quality, and inform instructional program decisions.

FCMAT may be requested to provide fiscal crisis or management assistance by a school district, charter school, community college, county office of education, the state Superintendent of Public Instruction, or the Legislature.

When a request or assignment is received, FCMAT assembles a study team that works closely with the LEA to define the scope of work, conduct on-site fieldwork and provide a written report with findings and recommendations to help resolve issues, overcome challenges and plan for the future.

FCMAT has continued to make adjustments in the types of support provided based on the changing dynamics of K-14 LEAs and the implementation of major educational reforms.

Studies by Fiscal Year



FCMAT also develops and provides numerous publications, software tools, workshops and professional development opportunities to help LEAs operate more effectively and fulfill their fiscal oversight and data management responsibilities. The California School Information Services (CSIS) division of FCMAT assists the California Department of Education with the implementation of the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS). CSIS also hosts and maintains the Ed-Data website (www.ed-data.org) and provides technical expertise to the Ed-Data partnership: the California Department of Education, EdSource and FCMAT.

FCMAT was created by Assembly Bill (AB) 1200 in 1992 to assist LEAs to meet and sustain their financial obligations. AB 107 in 1997 charged FCMAT with responsibility for CSIS and its state-wide data management work. AB 1115 in 1999 codified CSIS' mission.

AB 1200 is also a statewide plan for county offices of education and school districts to work together locally to improve fiscal procedures and accountability standards. AB 2756 (2004) provides specific responsibilities to FCMAT with regard to districts that have received emergency state loans.

In January 2006, Senate Bill 430 (charter schools) and AB 1366 (community colleges) became law and expanded FCMAT's services to those types of LEAs.

Since 1992, FCMAT has been engaged to perform more than 1,000 reviews for LEAs, including school districts, county offices of education, charter schools and community colleges. The Kern County Superintendent of Schools is the administrative agent for FCMAT. The team is led by 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

Background

Located in western Riverside County, the Jurupa Unified School District serves approximately 19,000 students at 16 elementary schools, three middle schools, three comprehensive high schools, one continuation high school, one alternative high school, and one community day school. The district also operates a pre-kindergarten preparatory center (preschool) and an online academy. There are no charter schools authorized by the district. At two of its campuses the district hosts a nonpublic school (NPS), which serves 54 of the district's special needs students. The district has a five-member governing board.

The district is part of the Riverside County Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA). According to 2016-17 data from the California Department of Education (CDE), 2,256 students ages birth to 22 who live in the district are identified with special needs.

In December 2016, the district and the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) entered into an agreement for FCMAT to review the district's special education program.

Study and Report Guidelines

FCMAT visited the district on May 2-5, 2017 to conduct interviews, collect data, and begin reviewing documents. This report is the result of those activities and is divided into the following sections:

- Executive Summary
- General Education Academic and Behavior Support (SST/RtI²/MTSS/PBIS)
- Identification Rate
- Continuum of Services and the Least Restrictive Environment
- Special Education Staffing and Caseloads
- Paraeducator Staffing
- Related Services
- Organizational Structure and Central Staffing
- Fiscal Considerations
- Appendix

In writing its reports, FCMAT uses the Associated Press Stylebook, a comprehensive guide to usage and accepted style that emphasizes conciseness and clarity. In addition, this guide emphasizes plain language, discourages the use of jargon and capitalizes relatively few terms.

Study Team

The study team was composed of the following members:

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*As a member of this study team, this consultant was not representing his employer but was working solely as an independent contractor for FCMAT. Each team member reviewed the draft report to confirm its accuracy and to achieve consensus on the final recommendations.

Executive Summary

Identification of students with special needs is influenced by a district's implementation of general education processes and interventions, such as Student Success Teams (SSTs), Response to Intervention and Instruction (RtI²), and Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).

The district has not formalized its Student Success Team process through board policy, administrative regulations or a handbook. As a result, the process and the systems that support it are applied inconsistently from school to school, leading to different experiences and outcomes for students.

Like the Student Success Teams, RtI² and MTSS have also been implemented differently at each school. Although the district intends these programs to be consistent districtwide, that goal has yet to be achieved, so their effect on referrals for special education services varies.

The district identifies 11.0% of its students as needing special education services, which is slightly higher than the 10.7% statewide identification rate; the district's identification rate has been nearly the same for the past three years. The district has a high identification rate for services for autism (18.1% versus 10.7 to 13.2%) and slightly higher other health impairments (13.1% versus 11.3 to 11.9%) compared to the state and the county, and it is identifying far fewer students with speech and language impairments than the statewide average (12.1% versus 21.7%). Many districts have a brochure, program description or manual describing the variety of program options available for special education students. These are helpful when parents and staff are considering the needs of a particular student. The district lacks such a communication tool; this contributes to a lack of understanding among staff and parents regarding the continuum of services offered, and it hinders the district's ability to communicate a defensible position regarding its offer of a free and appropriate public education. The district has begun exploring and implementing a full inclusion service delivery model (in which special education students receive the services they need but do so primarily in a general education classroom, not separately).

The district and its certificated employee bargaining unit entered into a memorandum of understanding to begin implementing a full inclusion service delivery model during 2016 and 2017. As a result, the staffing and caseloads for resource specialist and special day classes have been changed: the caseload for these classes in secondary schools is 23 students, well below the Education Code maximum of 28 students for resource specialist and well above the industry standard of 12-15 students for special day classes serving students with mild to moderate disabilities (mild/moderate). In elementary schools, the district has instances of both understaffing and overstaffing of resource specialists. Where caseloads exceed the maximum, the district is paying the teachers extra, pursuant to the collective bargaining agreement. This situation presents an opportunity for the district to explore caseload sharing.

The district operates two different types of mild/moderate classes: a standard mild/moderate class, and a functional skills class. The latter more closely resemble classes for students with moderate to severe disabilities: students receive an alternative curriculum and take the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) state test.

Caseloads in functional skills classes are unofficially held at lower numbers than other mild/moderate classes; this skews the caseload averages and staffing levels and thus the districtwide analysis of special day class caseloads and staffing. The differences between the standard mild/moderate classes and the functional skills classes become clearer at the secondary level: students

who are not on the standard high school diploma track are enrolled in the functional skills classes, and adult students ages 18-22 are enrolled in one of three functional skills classes. Staff indicated there is concern at elementary schools regarding how the decision is made to place a student in a functional skills class. In practice it is regarded as more restrictive than a mild/moderate class, and is the only placement option for which this is the case.

The collective bargaining agreement specifies maximum special day class caseloads of 17 for elementary school and 18 for secondary school, which is higher than the industry standard for mild/moderate classes and significantly higher than the industry standard for moderate/severe (which is in practice comparable to some of the district's functional skills classes). FCMAT has not included recommendations to reduce resource specialists or increase special day class staff in this report because the district has modified its approach to staffing based on the inclusion model. The district's instructional assistant staffing for resource specialist classes and mild/moderate students is at or below Education Code and industry standards. The district has more 1-to-1 instructional assistants than classroom instructional assistants. The district should follow rigorously the procedures in the Riverside County SELPA Related Services Independence Assistance document, including creating individualized education program (IEP) goals to help students who have 1-to-1 instructional assistants become independent.

Speech and language pathologists' K-12 caseloads are slightly higher than the statewide average, while their preschool caseloads are approximately the same as the statewide average. School psychologist staffing and caseloads for typical duties for K-12 are approximately the same as the statewide average.

Reports varied regarding the psychologists' access to assessments and protocols. Many evidence-based assessments are available for a wide range of suspected disabilities. Ideally, staff should be able to select an assessment that matches a particular student's needs. Psychologists also require updated professional development regarding autism diagnostics and could benefit from a common assessment report protocol. The role of behavior specialist is unclear. The position's classification description, use in practice and program need are not matched up with one another. Their role needs clarification; this position should be considered a related service provider with an assigned caseload.

FCMAT reviewed the organizational structure and staffing of the Education Support Services Department in the district's central office and determined that clerical and administrative support, programs, and functions align with those of similar districts served by multidistrict special education local plan areas (SELPAs) of comparable size and structure. Jurupa Unified has slightly fewer administrative and clerical support staff than comparison districts. The district's program specialists have fewer contracts days than those in the comparison districts, which affects support for extended school year and the special education program as a whole. The department could improve communication to and interaction with staff by holding regular meetings for employees with similar jobs (job-alike meetings).

School districts throughout the state face a continuing challenge in funding special education as the difference between federal and state funding provided and the mandated costs for vital services continues to increase. The district's unrestricted general fund contribution to special education was 43% of total special education expenditures in 2014-15 and 45% in 2015-16. When special education transportation is included, those numbers increase to 52% for 2014-15 and to 53% for 2015-16. These are lower, however than the statewide average of 60%.

Position control is essential for school district budgeting because employee salaries and benefits are usually 85% to 90% of a school district's costs. Staff reported that the district has three systems for tracking special education personnel. This leads to duplicate efforts, potentially higher error rates, and a lack of reconciliation among the three systems. Without a reliable position control system, it is impossible for a district's budget, budget monitoring and decisions to be accurate, efficient and effective.

The district lacks a systematic process for comparing invoices from nonpublic schools and agencies against the services delivered to ensure accuracy before authorizing and making payment. It also does not conduct a routine cost-benefit analysis to determine if it would be more efficient for the district to operate programs that are currently operated by nonpublic schools or agencies, the SELPA, and the Riverside County Office of Education.

Findings and Recommendations

General Education Academic and Behavior Support (SST/RTI²/MTSS/PBIS)

Most special education students come from the general education setting. Identification of special needs is influenced by the district's implementation of student success teams (SSTs), Response to Intervention and Instruction (RTI²), and multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS). FCMAT reviewed the district's implementation of SST, RTI², MTSS and positive behavior intervention systems (PBIS).

Student Success Team

The SST process is a longstanding and widely used method that gathers information from teachers, specialists and parents to give a struggling student additional educational strategies and interventions. A staff member or a parent can refer a student to the team. SST meetings allow all parties to share concerns and develop a plan. The interventions agreed upon will vary depending on a student's educational needs. The process has proven to be successful when consistently implemented.

Staff reported that the district has no formal board policies or administrative regulations to guide expectations for supporting struggling learners. Staff also indicated the district has no SST manual, guideline, or districtwide initiative to support informal, classroom based early interventions or formal interventions recommended in the SST process. Staff report that the SST process varies from school to school, including determining when to hold a formal or informal meeting, data collection, expectations, and intervention suggestions. Schools may or may not include data collected when interventions are attempted.

Some schools report that grade-level meetings include conversations about specific struggling learners. Teachers then try various adaptations and interventions in the general education setting. If these attempts to remediate the learner's challenges fail, a formal SST meeting is held at which staff (such as the teacher, administrator, and psychologist) and the student's parent hold a more rigorous discussion. Staff reported they may or may not have a follow-up meeting three to six months later depending on the teacher's request. Staff at some schools report that there are no formal meetings as described above. The district does not have standard forms for this process. Some schools reported that they use their own forms, and some do not use the SST process. Some staff in the district refer to an industrywide reference book but others do not.

The district has provided teachers and support staff with formal professional development to help them implement The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), which is a set of procedures and measures for assessing students' acquisition of early literacy skills from kindergarten through sixth grade. The district has implemented elements of DIBELS for kindergarten through second grade, and it plans to expand it to third grade next year. Staff reported that some schools use DIBELS as they were trained to do, but at others teachers can choose whether or not to use it to monitor progress. One of the intended uses of DIBELS is to help make decisions during the initial needs assessment, which is usually at an SST meeting.

For students in grades 4-6, the use of *Language!*, a comprehensive literacy curriculum that includes assessment and intervention, varies from school to school. This curriculum integrates reading, writing, spelling, vocabulary, grammar, foundational skills, and spoken English.

The use of *Language!* is also intended to inform teachers regarding students' needs and progress. For secondary students, teachers rely on course grades for this information; however, grades measure progress differently from teacher to teacher. It would benefit the district to exercise caution when using course grades as the only tool to determine whether an SST meeting is needed for a student.

Because of inconsistency in practice, a student who struggles may be assessed for special education at one school before general education strategies and interventions are implemented. At a different school, the same student might have been discussed at an SST meeting and appropriate general education strategies and interventions implemented for them, resulting in improved achievement and eliminating the need for assessment for special education.

District staff indicated that schools that lack a strong SST process or RtI² implementation have a higher rate of assessment and referral. Schools with a weak SST process may qualify a student as having a specific learning disability (SLD) and thus being eligible for special education, whereas a school that implemented appropriate general education reading or math interventions may not have qualified that student.

Staff reported that parents sometimes request a special education assessment. In response, some schools hold a meeting to determine the need to move toward assessment; others move to assessment regardless of staff members' opinions regarding the need. The SST process could bring consistency to such situations. Some schools provide strategies and interventions that support the struggling learner, obviating the need to move toward assessment. Staff reported there is no standard districtwide process for accepting or denying a request for assessment. It is best practice to have such a process, including giving parents prior written notice in the form of a formal letter stating the reasons for any denial of assessment.

It is more expensive to serve a student with an individual educational program (IEP) than to provide general education interventions and supports. Identifying a student for special education without first providing general education interventions is inconsistent with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and is not in a student's best interest. Special education should be the last form of intervention. State and federal laws mandate that students have the opportunity to be served in general education with their nondisabled peers to the greatest extent possible. This concept is known as the least restrictive environment (LRE).

Response to Intervention and Instruction (RtI²)

In 2004, the reauthorization of the IDEA (IDEA 2004) provided support for methods that include a response to scientific, research-based interventions. The law states that these methods may be used as alternatives to the discrepancy model (the traditional process of comparing a child's intellectual ability and their progress in school as the basis for their eligibility for special education) when identifying students with learning disabilities. IDEA 2004 also shifted research-based interventions from special education to general education, stressing that these would no longer be limited to special education students but would apply to all students. The law allows each state to develop its own guidelines and regulations. Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI²) provides districts with a method to drive educational decisions and measure academic growth.

The CDE information further states the following:

RtI² is meant to communicate the full spectrum of instruction, from general core, to supplemental or intensive, to meet the academic and behavioral needs of students. RtI²

integrates resources from general education, categorical programs, and special education through a comprehensive system of core instruction and interventions to benefit every student. *

The CDE states that RtI² is used in the following three ways:

1. Prevention:

All students are screened to determine their level of performance in relation to the grade-level benchmarks, standards, and potential indicators of academic and behavioral difficulties. Rather than wait for students to fail, schools provide research-based instruction in general education.

2. Intervention:

Based on frequent progress monitoring, interventions are provided for general education students not progressing at a rate or level of achievement commensurate with their peers. These students are selected to receive more intense interventions.

3. Component of SLD determination:

The RtI² approach can be one component of the SLD determination as addressed in the IDEA 2004 statute and regulations. The data from the RtI² process may be used to demonstrate that a student has received researched-based instruction and interventions as part of the eligibility determination process. *

*Source: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/sr/documents/sldeligibtyrti2.doc>

Determining Specific Learning Disability Using Response to Instruction and Intervention

The CDE is further defining how RtI² could be used in the eligibility process.

Like SST, RtI² in the district is school-based and may or may not have strong leadership guidance at the school. The district office staff stated the district's RtI² philosophy and its goal to make it a districtwide process. School staff incorrectly defined RtI² as best, first instruction.

Staff reported inconsistent implementation of RtI², including completing universal assessments such as DIBELS and *Language!* three times per year. District staff also reported that use of RtI² varies from school to school, and thus so do special education referrals for assessments. This may lead to under- or over-qualifying students for special education, as discussed above. It is a best practices for a district to have clear, consistent districtwide expectations for and implementation of RtI².

District staff stated that the use of early literacy philosophy and mathematics intervention plans also differ from school to school. FCMAT reviewed many documents and PowerPoint presentations that indicate professional development is provided throughout the district in RtI², yet school staff reported a lack of teacher training, specifically in differentiated instruction and scaffolding techniques. This somewhat contradictory information regarding training raises questions about the lack of buy-in from staff, the implementation as a result of training provided, and support from the intervention coach. The district may want to consider developing a professional development needs assessment to determine areas of need specified by the teachers.

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

An article titled "\$10 Million to Design MTSS in California" in *The Special EDge*, winter 2015, Volume 29, No. 1, describes MTSS as "standards based instruction, interventions, mental

health, and academic and behavioral supports aligned with accessible instruction and curriculum . . .” *The Special EDge* issue states that an MTSS approach can “be used to develop and align resources, programs, supports, and services at all organizational levels to increase positive student outcomes.” The March 2015 Report of California’s Statewide Task Force on Special Education, titled *One System: Reforming Education to Serve All Students*, states the following:

A multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) is a whole-school, data driven, prevention-based framework for improving learning outcomes for every student through a layered continuum (typically three tiers) of evidence-based practices that increases in intensity, focus, and target to a degree that is commensurate with the needs of the student.

The publication also states, “Operating at the student level, RTI is a part of MTSS and echoes the tenets of the MTSS structure.”

The CDE provides information regarding the similarities and differences between MTSS and RtI² as follows:

MTSS incorporates many of the same components of RtI², such as the following:

- Supporting high-quality standards and research-based, culturally and linguistically relevant instruction with the belief that every student can learn including students of poverty, disabled students, English learners, and students from all ethnicities evident in the school and district cultures.
- Integrating a data collection and assessment system, including universal screening, diagnostics and progress monitoring, to inform decisions appropriate for each tier of service delivery.
- Relying on a problem-solving system process and method to identify problems, develop interventions and, evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention in a multi-tiered system of service delivery.
- Seeking and implementing appropriate research-based interventions for improving student learning.
- Using school-wide and classroom research-based positive behavioral supports for achieving important social and learning outcomes.
- Implementing a collaborative approach to analyze student data and working together in the intervention process.

MTSS has a broader scope than does RtI². MTSS also includes the following:

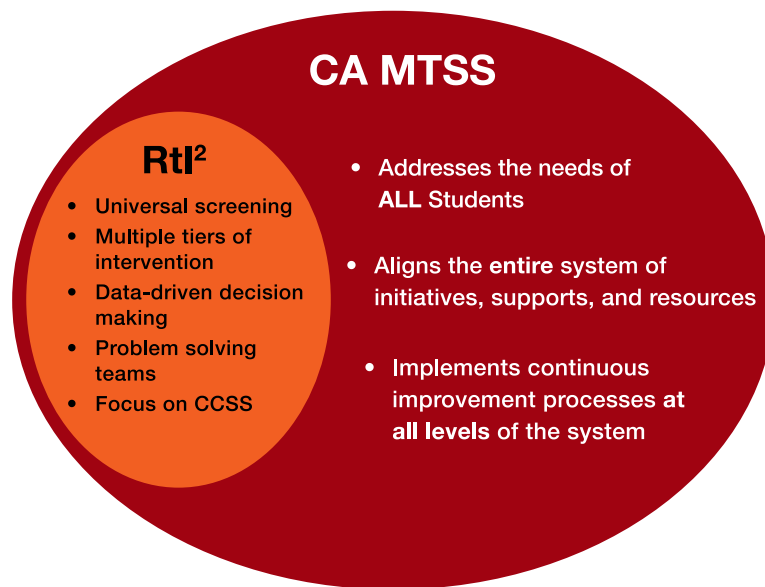
- Focusing on aligning the entire system of initiatives, supports, and resources.
- Promoting district participation in identifying and supporting systems for alignment of resources, as well as site and grade level.
- Systematically addressing support for all students, including gifted and high achievers.
- Enabling a paradigm shift for providing support and setting higher expectations for all students through intentional design and redesign of integrated services and supports, rather than selection of a few components of RtI and intensive interventions.

- Endorsing Universal Design for Learning instructional strategies so all students have opportunities for learning through differentiated content, processes, and product.
- Integrating instructional and intervention support so that systemic changes are sustainable and based on Common Core State Standards (CCSS) aligned classroom instruction.
- Challenging all school staff to change the way in which they have traditionally worked across all school settings.

Source: California Department of Education, <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri/mtsscomprti2.asp>

MTSS is not designed for use when making special education placement decisions, such as determining specific learning disabilities; MTSS focuses on all students in education contexts.

The following figure displays similarities and differences between California's MTSS and RtI² processes. Both rely on RtI² data gathering through universal screening, data-driven decision making, problem-solving teams, and a focus on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). However, MTSS has a broader approach: it addresses the needs of all students by aligning the entire system of initiatives, supports and resources, and by implementing continual improvement processes at all levels.



Source: California Department of Education

For more information and documents please refer to the California Department of Education website. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri/mtsscomprti2.asp>

Both RtI² and MTSS are needed to build a comprehensive system of interventions and supports for all students. However, as with SST and RtI², the district does not have a districtwide MTSS process. The district supports each school with a 1.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) intervention teacher; any staffing beyond that is left up to each school's discretion. District staff reported that some schools used discretionary funds to pay for additional intervention teachers and supplemental materials, while others used those funds for other purposes and did not have any remaining money to purchase additional supports and services.

The district does not have a minimum standard for common intervention options. Staff stated the district lacks a universal design of supports, though they could articulate what should occur, such as ongoing progress monitoring and three levels of tiered interventions. It would benefit the district to prioritize RtI² and MTSS through a districtwide committee that includes representatives from administration and teaching staff at each school, to provide intensive RtI² and MTSS training for all staff, and to outline the training phase in its strategic plan and its Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP).

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

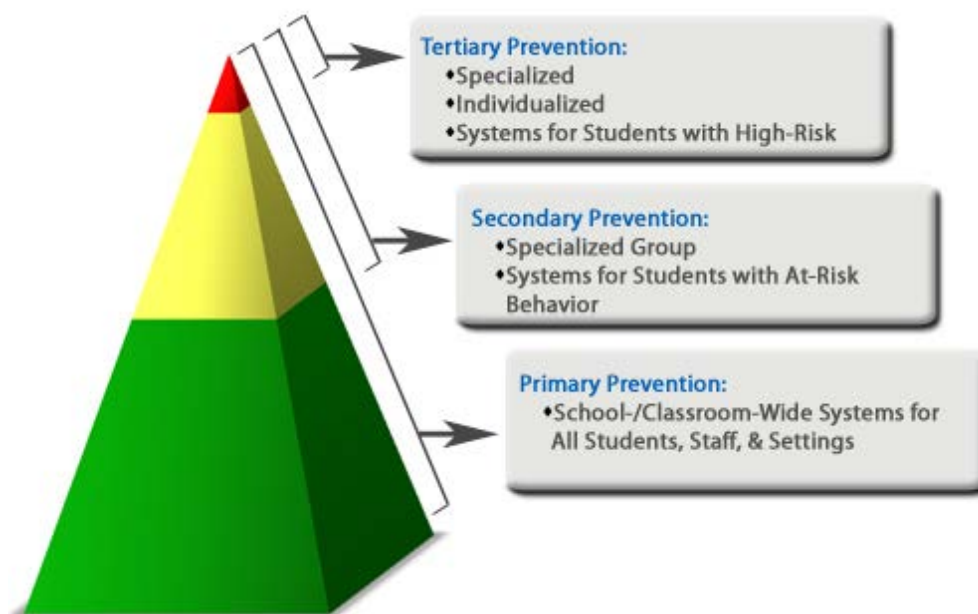
Unfortunately, no single method can remove the barriers created when behaviors disrupt learning, because the climate of each classroom is different. Interventions work best when they are based on the needs of each school, classroom, and student.

One of the foremost advances in schoolwide discipline is the emphasis on schoolwide systems of support that include strategies for defining, teaching and supporting appropriate student behaviors. Instead of using a piecemeal approach of individual behavioral management plans, a continuum of positive behavior support for all students in a school is implemented in classrooms and in nonclassroom areas such as hallways, buses and restrooms.

Positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) are about all students achieving social, emotional and academic success by having an established social culture and academic supports. Attention is focused on creating and sustaining schoolwide, classroom, and individual support that improves personal, health, social, family, work, and recreation outcomes for all by making misbehavior less effective, and desired behavior more functional.

The following diagram illustrates the multilevel approach PBIS offers to all students.

Continuum of Schoolwide Instructional and Positive Behavior Supports



Source: <http://www.granvillecsd.org/GHS.cfm?subpage=624784>

In 2012-13 the district was suspending a disproportionate number of African-American students and was required to set aside money to plan for and prove it was making positive efforts to reverse this.

Principals were to develop and implement a plan. The district provided extra pay to existing staff to be PBIS coaches and provide assistance to all schools. Documents show that in January 2013 all schools developed PBIS teams and received training. However, despite the plan for all schools to introduce schoolwide expectations, they did not. In the spring of 2014, a Boys Town training called *Teaching Social Skills in Schools* was provided. The district documented the attendance and collected evaluations of the trainings. Staff reported it was beneficial and that they would benefit from more information. The district plan was to pilot low-level referrals at three schools. All schools were supposed to collect low-level referral data in fall 2015, but there was no evidence this data was collected.

Both district and school staff reported this history and recognizes the positive changes PBIS has made in the district; however they expressed the need for the process to move forward to its next steps. Employees indicated that mental health counselors are assigned to special education but must be pulled from their normal assignment when a general education student needs their help. The district is working toward researching and hiring school psychologist interns from local colleges to help general education students, beginning in the high schools.

FCMAT reviewed Indicator 4 of the state's Special Education Annual Performance Report Measures on the district, which specifies the number of students with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled for more than ten days. In 2013-14 there were 16 students, in 2014-15 there were 12 students, and in 2015-16 there were 23 students. Although these numbers do not exceed the statewide average, the trend shows that even with PBIS and alternatives to suspension, the district has continued to increase its suspension and expulsion rate. The district is suspending African-American students at a rate of 3.80%, which is higher than the statewide average of 2.43%. The district needs to review this data immediately.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Develop board policies and administrative regulations regarding preintervention supports.
2. Implement SST districtwide at all schools, with the Curriculum and Instruction Department leading and monitoring the processes and procedures.
3. Develop and implement an SST handbook and update it at least annually.
4. Develop and implement consistent districtwide SST forms and progress monitoring expectations.
5. Consider using the SST tools in the Special Education Information System (SEIS) to track progress and use of standard forms.
6. Provide professional development on the SST process and RtI², based on a needs assessment. Consider implementing annual refresher trainings.
7. Formalize a process for accepting or denying parents' requests for assessment.

8. Implement and establish baseline expectations for RtI² at all sites; ensure that the Curriculum and Instruction Department leads this effort and monitors the processes and procedures.
9. Develop consistent RtI² forms and progress monitoring expectations districtwide.
10. Implement MTSS at all schools; ensure that the Curriculum and Instruction Department leads this initiative.
11. Provide intensive MTSS training for all district staff.
12. Continue PBIS at all schools; ensure the Curriculum and Instruction Department leads this effort.
13. Continue to examine mental health supports at schools, with the goal of providing appropriate support to all students.
14. Review suspension and expulsion data to determine its accuracy and inform practices.
15. Continue to develop alternatives to suspension.

Identification Rate

As shown in the table below, the district is identifying 11% of its students as having disabilities, which is slightly higher than the statewide identification rate of 10.7%. The district's identification rate has been at or very close to this level for the most recent three years. This data excludes infants and preschool age children because the statewide and countywide averages are for students in kindergarten through age 22.

District Identification Rate

School Year	Total Enrollment	**Students with IEPS	Percentage
2014-15	19,330	2,131	11.0%
2015-16	19,271	2,144	11.2%
2016-17	19,194	2,130	11.0%

Source: Data Quest and Ed-Data.org, CASEMIS

**Excludes infants and preschool age students.

Identification Rate of Students as of December 1, 2015

The chart below compares identification rates by disability for the district, for Riverside County and for the state. The district is identifying 18.1% of its students as having autism which is considerably higher than the statewide average of 10.7% and the countywide average of 13.2%. At the same time, the district is identifying just 12.1% of students as having speech and language impairments, compared to a statewide average identification rate of 21.7%.

It would benefit the district to examine its overidentification of students with autism and its underidentification of students with speech and language impairments, and any possible relationship between the two. Speech and language impairments usually require the least costly services of any disability, whereas emotional disturbance and autism spectrum disorder disabilities require some of the most costly services.

Employees consistently reported that school psychologists have not received professional development regarding assessment tools that can help build a defensible report of assessment and identification of disability. Staff also report that school psychologists and speech and language pathologists have not received professional development regarding the change made to the law in 2013 regarding criteria for autism spectrum disorder (see below). Both of these circumstances can lead to overidentification and thus to a variance between needs and the services provided.

The new autism spectrum disorder regulation deletes the phrase "autistic-like behaviors" and adds the phrase "characteristics often associated with autism" (5 CCR 3030(b)(1)). The new list of three "characteristics often associated with autism" replaces the former seven "autistic-like behaviors" but is very similar:

- (1) engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements; (2) resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines; and (3) unusual responses to sensory experiences.

The CDE explained that aligning California's criteria with federal requirements removes "confusion among educators when state and federal eligibility requirements for determining whether a student has autism are inconsistent" and helps "ensure that students with autism are appropriately identified, and receive the appropriate services for their needs."

Source: <http://adamsesq.com/amended-california-special-education-regulations-in-effect/>

The district's school psychologists reported they were directed to choose an assessment protocol for evaluating students for special education. If staff wanted or needed to use any assessment protocol other than the one they initially chose, they would have to pay for it out of their annual funding allocation set aside for professional development and office supplies. Many evidence-based assessment protocols are available and in use; they assess a wide range of suspected disability areas.

Ideally, a school psychologist would be able to select an assessment that best meets a particular student's needs. For example, one assessment is appropriate for a psychologist to assess a student's intellectual ability, while other assessment protocols are best for assessing a student who is nonverbal, and yet others for a student who is verbal. There are also evidence-based assessments specific to autism, such as the Autism Diagnostic Observation Scale (ADOS), on which all staff should be trained and for which staff and the district should commit sufficient time to implement effectively. Most districts use a standard assessment report template to help ensure staff can produce a consistent and defensible final report regardless of the assessment team members' writing abilities and styles. The district lacks such a template. Staff stated they would like to have such a template that is used districtwide.

The district is identifying a slightly higher percentage of students with other health impairments (OHI) (13.1% versus 11.3 to 11.9%) and a slightly lower percentage of students with emotional disturbances (2.3% versus 2.6 to 3.3%) than the countywide and statewide averages. In addition, in recent years its rate of identification for students with emotional disturbances has decreased while its rate of identification of OHI students has increased.

Properly and accurately assessing a student's needs allows a district to provide them with the services they need, which benefits both the student and the district.

December 1, 2015 Identification Rates by Disability

Disability	District	County	State
Intellectual Disability	6.1	6.2	5.9
Hard of Hearing	2.4	1.8	1.4
Deaf	0.1	0.2	0.4
Speech or Language Impairment	11.7	21.3	21.7
Visual Impairment	0.6	0.4	0.4
Emotional Disturbance	2.3	2.6	3.3
Orthopedic Impairment	1.2	1.4	1.5
Other Health Impairment	13.1	11.9	11.3
Specific Learning Disability	41.9	41.5	39.2
Deaf-Blindness	0	0	0
Multiple Disability	1.9	1.3	0.9
Autism	18.1	10.7	13.2
Traumatic Brain Injury	0.2	0.2	20.2

Source: California Special Education Management Information System (CASEMIS) 12-1-2015; includes preschool

Identification Rates 2014-15 through 2016-17

Disability	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Intellectual Disability	6.1	6.1	6.1
Hard of Hearing	2.2	2.4	2.3
Deaf	0.1	0.1	0.3
Speech or Language Impairment	11.7	11.7	12.1
Visual Impairment	0.7	0.6	0.5
Emotional Disturbance	2.3	2.3	1.6
Orthopedic Impairment	1.5	1.2	1.5
Other Health Impairment	11.6	13.1	13.2
Specific Learning Disability	43.9	41.9	41.7
Deaf-Blindness	0	0	0
Multiple Disability	1.7	1.9	1.9
Autism	17.4	18.1	18.1
Traumatic Brain Injury	0.3	0.2	0.2

Source: CASEMIS 12-1-2014, 12-1-2015, 12-1-2016; includes preschool

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Consider creating a variety of assessments and protocols and making them available to all psychologists to check out.
2. Provide intensive professional development for psychologists and speech and language pathologists in the area of autism.
3. Provide defensible assessment protocols for staff who assess students for speech and language impairments and autism spectrum disorders.
4. Develop a common assessment report template for all staff to use.
5. Rely on professional staff assessments that identify specific disabilities, and do not change the disability determination without justification based on the assessment.

Continuum of Services and the Least Restrictive Environment

FCMAT analyzed whether the district provides a continuum of special education and related services, including whether it places students in the least restrictive environment (LRE). The IDEA sets nationwide minimum standards for services to disabled children, and it governs how states and public agencies provide early interventions, special education, and related services to all eligible infants, toddlers (preschoolers), children, and youth with disabilities up to age 22. Further, each state must ensure that a free appropriate public education (FAPE) is available to any disabled child who needs special education and related services, regardless of whether the child has not failed or been retained in a course or grade and is advancing from grade level to grade level (34 CFR 300.101(c)).

The district does not have a written brochure, program description, or manual that describes its programs and services for students with disabilities. The Riverside County Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) handbook states on page 19 that all districts should have a continuum of services from least restrictive to most restrictive. Staff at the district's schools could not state what services and options are offered through the district or at specific schools, nor could they state with confidence that they would be able to offer FAPE at IEP meetings. The description below was provided by district central administration staff in response to FCMAT's request for a description of program options, and it mimics the SELPA's options.

Service Delivery Options from Least Restrictive to Most Restrictive

- General Education Program
- General Education with Related Services
- General Education with Consultation/Collaboration with Special Education Staff
- General Education with Specialized Academic Instruction
- Separate Classroom for mild to moderate
- State Special Schools
- Non-Public School
- Alternative Education
- Home/Hospital
- Residential Setting

Source: district data

After a review of the continuum of service and staff reports, FCMAT and the district determined that some areas need to be adjusted to align with state and federal requirements. These are described below.

- The schools provide mental health services inconsistently. Staff reported that students are not taught skills to replace undesirable behaviors exhibited with desirable behaviors; rather, consequences are provided. Students need to have a place to calm their state of mind and body, and they need staff available to teach replacement behaviors.
- The district is moving toward a full inclusion service delivery model. On April 28, 2016, the district entered into a one-year memorandum of understanding (MOU)

with the certificated employee bargaining unit that describes the training and inclusion program plan. The MOU describes the training staff will receive and the pilot school plan for the inclusive setting. Staff reported Troth Elementary was the elementary school chosen to host the inclusive pilot program. Staff reported there was originally a four-day inclusion training for staff during the 2015-16 school year and a one and one-half day training on the topic of co-teaching. The 18 sixth grade mild/moderate special day class (SDC) students were fully included in two general education classes using one resource specialist, one SDC teacher, and two instructional assistants. The school is considering adding the fifth grade mild/moderate SDC students for the 2017-18 school year. In addition, an inclusion committee was formed that included the special education director, special education coordinators, certificated employee bargaining unit president, general education teachers, and special education teachers. Although the committee met every two months, this was considered an informal process. Staff interviewed could not articulate the district's definition of inclusion or a shared understanding of the inclusion model. Each school develops and designs its own special education service delivery option. Staff reported that students who move from one school to another often must adjust to a different delivery model at the new school, and their IEP is amended. This is contrary to IDEA and best practices, which require that a student's placement be determined based on his or her needs, not a school's. When the district formally expands the inclusive model, it will need to determine how it will make enough space available in general education classrooms for students with special needs to be counted in the general education enrollment.

- The district does not have a procedural handbook for special education that includes federal and state legal requirements for providing special education and related services.
- Technology in special education classrooms is not commensurate with that in general education classrooms. Implementation is inconsistent, in large part because of a lack of clarity about who is accountable to provide technology and how it is funded in special education. Special education staff also reported that they do not all have equal access to the core curriculum; access varies from school to school.
- The district has no guidelines for establishing eligibility for extended school year (ESY) in special education. Special education administrators were unaware that there is a rubric and guidelines for determining eligibility for all ESY services.
- The Annual Performance Report Measures prepared by CDE for 2015-16 indicate that the district did not meet targets for Indicator 6: Preschool LRE, which is designed to increase participation in general education by three- to five-year-old children with disabilities.
- The CDE sets targets for each district in all areas identified in the Annual Performance Report Measures. Two preschool measures include:
 - A. *Regular early childhood program and receiving a majority of special education and related services in the regular program.*
 - B. *Separate special education class, separate school or residential facility.*
- For 2015-16, the district did not meet targets for access to LRE. Only 15.24% of its special education students received services in a regular program; the target minimum

was 41.8%. Failure to meet or exceed this target means fewer students, in this case significantly fewer, receive services in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Conversely, 80.49% of the district's special education students receive services in separate programs; the target maximum for this is 34.8%.

Measure	Total No. of Students receiving Special Education (Age 3-5)	No. of Students in the environment	Percent of students in environment receiving Special Education	Target This Year	Target Met?
Regular Program	164	25	15.24%	>41.8%	No
Separate Schools		132	80.49%	<34.8%	No

Source: CDE 2015-16 District Level Special Education Annual Performance Report Measure

- The district operates its own federal Head Start and state preschool, which are general education programs. Although there are state and federal criteria for enrollment into the program, the district can design methods through which disabled students can participate. The district has the ability to develop its own collaboration and inclusive service delivery. Documents showed that the district serves 71 students at only two schools. This may mean the district has high transportation costs for this program. It may benefit the district to review this program and determine whether it is providing services in the LRE, and whether having it at only two locations is increasing transportation costs.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Provide services and placement for students with behavior challenges and emotional disturbances.
2. Develop, update frequently, and provide to all staff a list of program and service options on a continuum from least to most restrictive. Explain all the options to staff and include examples of what disability or disabilities might typically lead to a student having access to each service or program.
3. Develop manuals and documents describing the continuum of services and program options.
4. Provide general and special education staff with professional development on the continuum of services.
5. Provide parents with information regarding the continuum of services and programs so they are more informed of service options when discussing student needs in an IEP meeting.
6. Ensure that its procedural manual for special education clearly outlines the steps needed to ensure compliance in the area of transition planning and service delivery.

7. Provide training for principals to ensure that students' access to programs and services is in compliance with state and federal laws, and that it aligns with the state standards.
8. Provide training for all special education teachers and school principals on procedures required in special education to ensure consistency in programs and services.
9. Evaluate the technology needs in special education classrooms, and ensure the availability and use of technology is commensurate with that provided to general education classes districtwide.
10. Ensure that special education teachers and classes are included as recipients when core curriculum books and materials are distributed.
11. Develop procedures that ensure that eligibility for ESY is determined by each student's needs as outlined in state and federal law.
12. Develop methods for including students with disabilities in its general education preschool programs.

Special Education Staffing and Caseloads

FCMAT analyzed special education staffing ratios and caseloads using applicable statutory requirements for mandated services and statewide guidelines.

The district serves students in grades K-12 with both resource specialist program (RSP) services and special day class (SDC) services for students with mild to moderate disabilities (mild/moderate). Students with moderate to severe disabilities (moderate/severe) who require SDC services are placed in a nonpublic school, Spectrum Center, which operates programs on school district sites; or in classes provided by the Riverside County Office of Education; or in other nonpublic schools at locations other than district schools. District RSP and SDC programs at the secondary level may be modified in service delivery models and student caseloads in keeping with the two-year MOU between the district and the certificated employee bargaining unit.

The intent of the MOU is to help the district move toward more inclusive special education models. At the elementary level the MOU establishes one school as a pilot site for schoolwide implementation of the inclusion model. The MOU also establishes a minimum of one general education teacher and one special education teacher at each of the remaining elementary schools to collaborate on inclusion. At the secondary level the MOU establishes a maximum caseload of 23 students in all special education instructional programs (RSP and SDC) to better support inclusion.

As a result, RSP teachers in the secondary schools have caseloads well below the Education Code maximum of 28 students per teacher FTE (E.C. 56362), and SDC teachers have significantly more students than the industry standard of 12-15 per FTE for mild/moderate classes. The MOU expires at the end of the 2016-17 school year, and the parties have not determined whether the MOU will be extended.

The effect of the MOU on RSP and SDC caseloads at the secondary level is shown in the tables later in this section.

District documents indicate at least six elementary RSP teachers have more than the Education Code maximum of 28 students. Consistent with the collective bargaining agreement with the certificated employee bargaining unit dated July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2017, district documents indicate those six teachers receive additional financial compensation. At the same time, the table below that shows RSP caseloads indicates that if all the district's RSP programs were at the maximum of 28 students, the program as a whole would be overstaffed by 1.89 FTE. Caseload records show at least six elementary RSP teachers with 18 or fewer students enrolled.

The district may want to consider RSP caseload sharing at the elementary level when circumstances permit. This report does not include specific recommendations to reduce RSP teaching staff or increase SDC teaching staff because of the district's decision to modify secondary special education caseloads as it moves toward a full inclusion approach.

District data indicate that the middle school resource programs and SDCs are averaging caseloads higher than the maximum of 23 specified in the MOU. Given the variety of service delivery approaches used, the district Education Support Services Department could benefit from reviewing its secondary special education service delivery models for efficient caseload management and consistency.

The district operates two different mild/moderate classes: standard mild/moderate classes, and functional skills classes. The functional skills classes most closely resemble moderate/severe classes but are not designated as such. Students in the functional skills classes receive an alternative

curriculum and take the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA), which is intended for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Caseloads in functional skills classes are unofficially kept lower than those in other mild/moderate classes; this skews districtwide SDC caseload and staffing averages.

The differences between the standard mild/moderate classes and the functional skills classes become clearer in secondary schools: students who are not on the standard high school diploma track are enrolled in functional skills SDCs. In addition, adult special needs students ages 18-22 are enrolled in one of three functional skills SDCs. Despite the official designation, the functional skills SDCs are the only district-operated placement option that is more restrictive than the mild/moderate SDCs.

Staff indicated there is concern at the elementary schools regarding how decisions are made to place a student in a functional skills setting, specifically that the district may be placing students in functional skills SDCs without a complete understanding of the moderate/severe nature of the program. More clarity is needed about the nature of the functional skills SDCs. This could be accomplished by redesignating these classes as moderate/severe and improving the description of the continuum of service. This change may require reassignment of existing staff or other employment actions because moderate/severe classes require a different teaching credential than mild/moderate classes.

The collective bargaining agreement with certificated employees lists only one type of SDC in the district, and it specifies a maximum caseload of 17 for all elementary SDCs and 18 for all secondary SDCs. The table below that contains SDC caseloads shows that the district's SDC caseload guidelines are higher than the industry standard for mild/moderate and that its functional skills class caseloads are significantly higher than the industry standard for moderate/severe.

In the middle schools, 1.0 FTE mild/moderate teacher is on special assignment; therefore, caseload analysis for the middle schools is based on 9.0 FTE rather than 10.0 FTE.

The district operates six special education preschool SDCs: one moderate/severe SDC and five 200-minutes daily mild/moderate SDCs; the latter include a two-day-a-week class and a three-day-a-week SDC taught by the same teacher. Each class is staffed with a minimum of one teacher and two three-hour-per-day instructional assistants. The industry standard for preschool staffing is based on an adult-to-student ratio that includes both the teacher and instructional assistants, as shown in the table below. The district's preschool moderate/severe SDC has a lower caseload than its mild/moderate SDCs. Because the mild/moderate SDCs are 200 minutes long but the instructional assistants work 180 minutes, the instructional assistants stagger their start times so the classes always have at least one instructional assistant, and at least three adults (teacher and instructional assistants) working together for the majority of each day. Four of the classes operate in a one in the morning and one in the afternoon configuration with two teachers teamed together. The teacher who is not the case manager for a given class provides 100 minutes of support to the teacher of record daily. In addition, there are 1.8 FTE 1-to-1 instructional assistants assigned to preschool.

Some preschool students with a mild language delay receive less intensive services from the speech pathologist at their neighborhood school; others with mild delays receive 120 minutes of service per week through the Riverside County Office of Education's Giving Real Advantages to Special Preschoolers (GRASP) program. Students with behavior needs and autism spectrum disorders can receive preschool support from the Spectrum Center nonpublic school, which provides services at two of the district's schools. The district also operates federal Head Start

preschool and state preschool programs at the same schools where the preschool SDCs are located. Preschool SDC students may be mainstreamed with nondisabled peers for 20 minutes at recess. District staff indicated that it is difficult to access mainstream opportunities for preschool SDC students in the federal Head Start and state preschool classes when those students demonstrate academic and social readiness for them. However, both schools have general education settings that provide opportunities for mainstreaming.

The tables below provide current snapshots of staffing levels for the major categories of services.

Resource Specialist Caseloads, K-12*

Grade Span	No. of FTE	Total Caseload	District Caseload Average	Education Code Caseload Maximum	Staffing FTE above (+) below (-) EC
Elementary	20.0	507	25.35	28	+1.89 FTE
Middle	8.0	192	24.00	28	+1.14 FTE*
High	21.0	417	19.86	28	+6.11 FTE*

*Caseloads are impacted by the MOU. See discussion above.

Nonseverely Handicapped Special Day Class (Mild/Moderate) K-12*

Grade Span	No. of FTE	Total Caseload	District Caseload Average	Industry Standard Caseload	Staffing FTE Above (+) Below (-) Industry Standard	District Caseload Average by Policy	Staffing FTE Above (+) Below (-) District Policy
Elementary	21.0	317	15.10	1-to-12-15	-0.13	1-to-17	+2.35
Middle	9.0	212	23.56	1-to-12-15	-5.13	1-to-18	-2.78
High	13.0	267	20.54	1-to-12-15	-4.80	1-to-18	-1.83

*Caseloads are impacted by the MOU and by the designation of functional skills SDCs as Mild/Moderate. See discussion above.

Source: District data and industry standards

Preschool Special Day Classes Including Instructional Assistants

Class Type	Teacher FTE	Total Caseload	IA Hours / Teacher FTE	Industry Standard Adult-to-Student Ratio	District Adult-to-Student Ratio*	Staffing FTE Above (+) Below (-) Industry Standard
Moderate to Severe	1.0	9	12 hrs (1.5 FTE)	1:5	1:3.6	+0.70
Mild to Moderate AM/PM and 2 day/3 day = 5 classes	4.0 (1 teacher provides 2 Day and 3 Day classes)	72	24.5 hrs (3.06 FTE)	1:7	1:10.2	-3.23

*Based on three-hour-per-day instructional assistants converted to six-hour-per-day (0.75 FTE)

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Consider changing the designation of the functional skills classes from mild/moderate to moderate/severe.
2. Take into account the potential effect designating functional skills classes as moderate/severe would have on caseloads and thus on the collective bargaining agreement.
3. Analyze secondary RSP and SDC service delivery models for efficient caseload management and consistency in light of the inclusion model being implemented.
4. Convene a work group, possibly led by the director of elementary education and the special education elementary coordinator, to help overcome barriers to mainstreaming preschool students.
5. Review elementary RSP teacher assignments to determine where caseload sharing between schools may be possible to help keep RSP caseloads at or below the Education Code maximum.

Paraeducator Staffing

The district has three classifications of instructional assistants: instructional assistant (three hours per day), which does not receive health and welfare benefits based on this single assignment; student attendant aide (six hours per day), which serves primarily as 1-to-1 support; and student attendant aide specialist (six hours per day), which performs specialized health support. The district employs only one student attendant aide specialist at this time. Most RSP and mild/moderate SDC (including preschool) teachers receive support from two three-hour-per-day instructional assistants. Staff indicated that using three-hour-per-day instructional assistants does not allow enough time for the teacher to plan with both instructional assistants, makes it difficult for the two instructional assistants to communicate about daily circumstances in the class, and results in disruption of coverage after one instructional assistant must leave and before the other arrives.

Staff indicated that three-hour-per-day instructional assistants frequently seek out a second assignment in the district, such as bilingual tutor, to secure six hours of work per day and thus receive health and welfare benefits. This practice may compromise the economic benefit of hiring three-hour-per-day employees.

Staff reported there is no orientation for new instructional assistants when they are hired; instead, all job training occurs after new staff are on the job. Staff indicated the district offers instructional assistants limited options for professional development, and notices to staff regarding professional development opportunities are inconsistent.

The California Education Code's only requirement for instructional staffing is in section 56362(f), which states, "At least 80% of the resource specialists within a local plan shall be provided with an instructional assistant." There are established industry standards for instructional assistant support to special education teachers and students, based primarily on the intensity of service. The industry standards are that a full-time resource specialist may receive one six-hour-per-day (0.75 FTE) instructional assistant; and full-time mild/moderate SDC teachers with a caseload of 12-15 students may receive one six-hour-per-day (0.75 FTE) instructional assistant. No industry standard has been established for 1-to-1 instructional assistant staffing; all 1-to-1 instructional assistant staffing is considered to be in excess of the standard support levels described above.

The district's Education Support Services Department has instituted procedures to standardize how it identifies the need for 1-to-1 instructional assistants. Staff reported that the district uses the Riverside County SELPA's Related Services Independence Assistance (RSIA) procedures with reasonable consistency. The RSIA is a formal assessment process that requires a signed assessment plan and decision regarding a student's need for 1-to-1 support, based on the assessment and determination made by the IEP team. The RSIA process is led by the district's behavior specialists; however, it also requires the involvement of school psychologists and an Education Support Services Department management employee.

Staff indicated the RSIA process is lengthy and requires a great deal of time from the staff involved, especially the behavior specialists, and that this takes staff away from other duties, especially for those whose primary responsibility is not assessment. The RSIA process includes the essential step of establishing IEP goals for independence from 1-to-1 assistance for every student who requires it. However, staff indicated that this step is seldom completed, and that if an initial goal for independence is developed, it is rarely assessed, reviewed and revised at subsequent IEP team meetings. This step of the RSIA process is needed to keep staff and parents focused on the

goal of reducing and ultimately eliminating a student's reliance on individual support, and it helps prevent automatically continuing support unchanged from one annual IEP to the next.

Staff stated that the majority of referrals for 1-to-1 assistance are for behavior support rather than medical support, and that most requests or referrals for 1-to-1 assistance come from district staff rather than parents. The district has a districtwide PBIS that helps staff members understand behavior issues as a skill deficit that can be corrected with replacement skills. Staff reported and documents indicate that the district operates no special education classes that focus specifically on behavior, such as classes for students with emotional disturbance. Staff stated that this deficiency may be contributing to the increased reliance on 1-to-1 support for students with behavioral issues.

The tables below provide current paraeducator staffing levels for the major categories of services.

Resource Specialist Services, K-12 (not including 1-to-1 instructional assistants)

Grades	Teacher FTE	Total Combined Instructional Assistant Hours	Industry Standard Instructional Assistant Hours per Day, per Teacher FTE	IA hours Over (+) Under (-) Industry Standard
Elementary School	20.0	120.0 hrs	6 hrs	At Industry Standard
	8.0			
Middle School		48.0 hrs	6 hrs	At Industry Standard
High School	21.0	108.0 hrs	6 hrs	(-) 18.0 hrs

Note: all RSP instructional assistants are three-hour-per-day employees.

Mild/Moderate Special Day Classes, K-12 (not including 1-to-1 instructional assistants)

Grades	Teacher FTE	Total Combined Instructional Assistant Hours	Industry Standard Instructional Assistant Hours per Day, per Teacher FTE	Instructional Assistant hours Over (+) Under (-) Industry Standard
Elementary School	21.0	117.0 hrs	6 hrs	(-) 9.0 hrs
Middle School	9.0	54.0 hrs	6 hrs	At Industry Standard
High School	13.0	75.0 hrs	6 hrs	(-) 3.0 hrs

Note: all SDC instructional assistants are three-hour-per-day employees.

Source: District data and industry standards.

1-to-1 Instructional Assistant FTE and Cost Comparison, K-12

Instructional Assistant Category	Total FTE	District-Calculated Average Cost per FTE **	Total Cost
Student Attendant Aide (1-to-1 six-hour-per-day positions)*	55.58*	\$46,532	\$2,586,249
Instructional Assistant (3-hour-per-day positions)	174.0	\$12,690	\$2,208,060
Total Cost			\$4,794,309

* Includes short term student attendant aides and total of assignment hours below, at, or above six hours per day and divided by six.

** Includes salary and benefits.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Continue to implement the Riverside County SELPA RSIA process thoroughly and consistently in every case involving a decision about whether a student needs 1-to-1 support.
2. Ensure that all students who receive 1-to-1 support have in their IEP goals for reaching independence from 1-to-1 support, and that these goals are reviewed and revised annually.
3. Consider the potential for reducing the number of 1-to-1 assistants by increasing district-provided services for students with behavioral issues, including SDCs for students with emotional disturbance.
4. Conduct a cost benefit analysis of maintaining three-hour-per-day instructional assistants versus employing six-hour-per-day instructional assistants in some settings where it may benefit a program, such as in the preschool SDCs.
5. Offer a variety of professional development opportunities for instructional assistants and student attendant aides, and communicate them clearly to classified employees.
6. Acquire or develop orientation training to be provided when employees are first hired, such as self-guided instructional videos for instructional assistants and student attendant aides.

Related Services

Related services are the developmental, corrective and other supportive services required to help a child with a disability benefit from special education (34 CFR 300.34). These services are written in the IEP and include but are not limited to those provided by psychologists, speech and language pathologists, adapted physical education teachers, occupational and physical therapists, and nurses. As is the case in most districts and SELPAs, the district contracts with outside providers for some of these services.

Staff reported that there are three systems for tracking special education personnel: a report generated by the Education Support Services Department from the Special Education Information System (SEIS); a FileMaker database maintained by the Personnel Department; and the Galaxy financial system used by business services and payroll. These three systems are not interconnected and may not all have identical data. FCMAT used 2016-17 caseload data the district prepared using SEIS.

Speech Pathologists

Education Code Section 56441.7(a) establishes a maximum caseload of 40 for speech pathologists serving preschool age students, and Education Code Section 56363.3 establishes a SELPAwide average of 55 students per speech pathologist for grades K-12. The district employs 17.2 FTE speech pathologists and contracts with a nonpublic agency (NPA) for an additional 3.0 FTE. The total annual cost of the NPA contracts is \$261,400.

The caseloads for K-12 speech pathologists are composed of 8% indirect and 92% direct speech and language services. The total staffing allocation for K-12 is 15.25 FTE speech pathologists with an average caseload of 56.4. Most districts determine speech pathologist staffing based on direct services only. Analyzing the amount of time spent providing indirect services could help the district more accurately calculate caseloads.

The district has 4.95 FTE speech pathologists for preschool students, with an average caseload of 40 students per speech pathologist.

Program	FTE	Caseload	Caseload Average	Education Code Caseload Requirement
Speech and Language Pathologists, Preschool	4.95	198	40	40 Maximum
Speech and Language Pathologists, K-12	15.25	860	56.4	55 Average

Source: Caseload list maintained by the district.

Note: The total FTE for speech and language pathologists includes 3.0 NPA contracted staff.

The district's speech pathologist caseloads for preschool students meet the statutory requirements, and its average caseload for students in grades K-12 is slightly higher than the legally required average. Rather than immediately increasing staff to lower the average to the legal requirement, it may benefit the district to perform a more detailed analysis of indirect caseloads and exit rates for students receiving speech and language students.

Employees reported that process for assigning speech pathologists to schools is equitable and functional, and that testing materials are adequate and available.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Attempt to fill speech pathologist positions with district employees. If this is not possible and contracted services are obtained, ensure the cost is negotiated with the NPA and is comparable to or less than the cost of an employed position.
2. Audit speech and language caseloads to determine the extent to which students are exiting speech services, and examine the extent to which students who receive indirect services require support.

Psychologists

Staffing documents show that the district employs 16 FTE school psychologists for grades K-12 and one FTE preschool psychologist. In addition to psychologists, the district employs 5.0 FTE mental health counselors. Staff reported the K-12 psychologists have common duties such as serving on the SST, assessments for all district schools and for its students at nonpublic schools, crisis counseling, and school site support as needed.

The preschool psychologist completes assessments for students ages 3-4 years and participates in the transition of students from infant services to preschool. The mental health counselors provide therapy for students with an IEP that requires educationally-related mental health services.

CalEdFacts (www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/fb/ then under Education Statistics select Pupil Services Staff in California Public Schools) indicates that in 2015-16 the statewide average K-12 school psychologist-to-student ratio was 1-to-1,100. Based on the district's enrollment of 19,282, the district has a psychologist-to-student ratio of 1-to-1,205, a level of staffing that is 1.5 FTE below the statewide average.

Program	# FTE	Enrollment	Industry Standard	District Average Caseload
Psychologists (K-12)	16	19,282	1:1,100	1:1,205

Source: District documents and CalEdFacts 2015-16.

Note: The preschool psychologist and the psychologists providing mental health services are not included in the K-12 calculation because of the distinct nature of their duties.

Staff reported that they would like to have more frequent job-alike meetings for the psychologists and that scheduled meetings not be canceled. The psychologists need professional development related to both their general duties and to specific areas unique to their needs and interests.

Reports varied about the psychologists' access to necessary assessments and protocols. The district is working to standardize the assessment tools used; however, some psychologists reported that they do not have access to the Wechsler Intelligence Scales or other assessments, and are not able to select different protocols they believe are essential for their work. Other psychologists report that they do have access to different protocols.

As discussed in the Identification Rate section of this report, many evidence-based assessments are available and are used in the field to help assess a wide range of suspected disability areas.

Staff reported that the Education Support Services Department lacks systematic criteria for creating equitable assignments for psychologists.

Staff in the Education Support Services Department and the business office gave differing reports on the number of mental health counselors who provide therapy for disabled students. One set of data provided indicates 4.0 FTE mental health counselors and another data set shows 6.5 FTE. After reconciling the data, FCMAT determined the correct staffing number was 5.0 FTE as indicated above. This discrepancy between different data in different departments highlights the need for a single position control database that all departments can use. In the district, mental health counselors are required to have a pupil personnel services credential and a school psychologist authorization, and a licensed clinical counselor designation is desirable. Currently school psychologists are performing these duties.

A uniform 30 minutes per week of mental health counseling is provided for a student whose IEP includes the requirement. It would benefit the district to examine the amount of mental health services delivered to all students to ensure that students with more intensive needs are receiving adequate services.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Schedule monthly job-alike meetings for psychologists during the school year, and ensure that the meetings take place.
2. Establish professional development opportunities based on both the total needs of the program and each psychologist's professional interests and needs.
3. Consider holding a collaborative planning session with psychologists to allow input regarding the assignment schedule to increase understanding of the department's and the various schools' needs.
4. Determine its current staffing of mental health counselors.
5. Examine the service delivery and levels of mental health services in light of mental health needs specified on IEPs, and seek to structure and deliver services to better meet each student's specific needs.

Behavior Specialists

The district has 1.5 FTE behavior specialists and an additional 1.0 FTE unfilled behavior specialist position. Behavior specialists perceive their role to be consultants to the teachers and staff; however, the job description defines this position as a related service provider and member of the IEP team that is involved in assessment and in developing behavioral goals and objectives. The district has no defined caseloads for this position as it is now managed and used, and the behavior specialists are not performing the role as defined by the job description.

Behavior specialist support should be part of a training model that helps general education teachers through school-level training and case-specific consultation. Several of the major duties and responsibilities identified in the behavior specialist job description are not being carried out. The functional analysis portion of behavior assessment is completed by the psychologists rather than the behavior specialists. It is a common and best practice for behavior specialists to serve as subject matter experts during the development of behavior intervention plans, but this is not occurring in the district.

Employees reported that behavior specialists spend a great deal of time and effort developing referrals for the RSIA process and assessments for 1-to-1 assistants, and filling those positions. As a result, their responsibilities for training and supporting school sites are limited. This is not the most effective and efficient assignment of work duties; a greater focus on the duties typical of a related service provider is warranted.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Examine the current job description for the behavior specialist position and update if necessary.
2. Before filling the open behavior specialist position, ensure that the essential duties of the position are clearly stated and being carried out by employees in this position.
3. Ensure that the behavior specialist position is defined as, acts as, and is perceived as a related service provider with a specific caseload, not as a consultant.
4. Ensure that behavior specialists have the training and support they need to serve as the subject matter experts on IEP teams when behavior intervention plans are developed.
5. Consider eliminating behavior specialists' duties related to developing referrals for the RSIA process and assessments of the need for 1-to-1 assistants, and filling those positions. Instead, have the behavior specialists focus on direct support for students with behavioral needs and consultation for teachers at the schools.

Occupational Therapists

Occupational therapists (OTs) collaborate and consult with general education and special education teachers, observe students, provide strategies to teachers, and follow up prior to referral and assessment.

The district does not employ OTs; rather, as is common in many districts, the services of certified OTs and certified occupational therapy assistants are provided by an NPA under contract with the district.

The cost of the contract with this NPA was \$325,500 for the 2015-16 school year and rose to \$465,000 for 2016-17. A total of 211 students in preschool through grade 12 receive OT services.

The industry standard for OT caseloads is 45-55 students per FTE; therefore, FCMAT used a caseload of 50 for comparison. The district contracts for 2.5 FTE of OT services, with an average caseload of 70 students per FTE. Thus the district is below industry standard OT staffing by 1.7 FTE. The district reported it is using certified occupational therapy assistants successfully and that this mitigates some of the need for more occupational therapists; however, the district does not have guidelines that define their work.

Program	No. of FTE	Caseload	District Average Caseload	Industry Standard Caseload
Occupational Therapist	2.5	211	84.4	45-55

Source: District and industry data.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Continue to monitor its caseloads for occupational therapists to ensure closer alignment to the industry standard.
2. Establish guidelines for the use of certified occupational therapy assistants.
3. Analyze the financial and operational feasibility of creating a district staff position of occupational therapist rather than contracting for these services.

Adapted Physical Education

Employees indicated there is 1.0 FTE adapted physical education (APE) teacher, who provides pull-out services to teach specific skills, push-in services to help students in PE classes, and whole class instruction. The current caseload is 63. The industry standard caseload is 45-55 per FTE; however, staff stated and FCMAT agrees that the full range of services provided allows for a larger caseload.

Recommendation

The district should:

1. Monitor the caseload for the APE teacher and ensure that the caseload remains close to the industry standard.

Nurses

The district provides a variety of healthcare services districtwide to general and special education students. The district has 4.0 FTE school nurses, who support health technicians at the schools. The industry-standard caseload for a school nurse is 2,510 students (CalEdFacts [www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/fb/] 2015-16). The district's nurses have an average caseload of 4,821, which is significantly higher than the industry standard. However, the industry standards do not include an adjustment for the consultation model the district uses to deliver health services; each school has a health technician who provides services under the supervision of a school nurse.

School nurses carry out all mandated hearing and vision screenings; train and support all health technicians assigned to schools; develop specialized health care plans for disabled students who have IEPs that identify unique and specialized health care needs; and help IEP teams identify students with health impairments.

The district's caseload for school nurses significantly exceeds the industry standard and may justify the addition of at least two school nurses to support the direct service and consultation model being used. As part of a discussion about additional nursing staff, it would be beneficial for the district to analyze the efficiencies of its healthcare services and supports and determine if more and/or other types of healthcare staff are needed, including licensed vocational nurses.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Review nursing caseloads and responsibilities and determine whether it needs more healthcare staff to meet industry-standard staffing levels.

Organizational Structure and Central Staffing

FCMAT reviewed the organizational structure and staffing of the Education Support Services Department in the district's central office to determine whether there is sufficient clerical and administrative support and whether the department's functions are aligned with those of other districts of comparable size and structure that are similarly served by a multidistrict SELPA.

Comparison with Similar Districts

For the comparison, FCMAT chose, Alvord, Val Verde and Palm Springs unified school districts. All three are in Riverside County, are served by the same SELPA, and have similar total enrollment, free and reduced-price meal counts, and English learner populations. In addition, comparability was determined based on a similar number of students with autism because this increases the department's need for certificated and support staff.

Data for the comparison was taken from the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) enrollment figures for 2015-16 and DataQuest special education enrollment figures for 2015-16, which are the most recent data posted to these sources. The total number of special education students from birth to age 22 was reported by district of residence.

Although comparative information is useful, it should not be the only measure of appropriate staffing levels. School districts are complex and vary widely in demographics and resources. Careful evaluation is recommended because generalizations can be misleading if unique circumstances are not considered.

District	Total Enrollment	Special Education Enrollment	Percentage of Students with Autism*
Alvord	19,466	2311	9.7%
Jurupa	18,282	2277	17.3%
Palm Springs	23,348	2396	10.0%
Val Verde	19,862	2155	6.0%

Source: CALPADS completed enrollment for 2015-16; DataQuest Special Education Enrollment 2015-16

*Autism rate = % of the special education population identified as autistic in DataQuest 2015-16

The comparison districts provided information on administrative and clerical support staffing. Each district assigns classifications and identifies positions differently. FCMAT reviewed job descriptions for administrative and clerical positions and combined some categories into like groups for this comparison. Some districts classify program specialists as administrators while others classify them as teachers, based on their assignment. This affects salary and the number of work days in a year. All the comparison districts defined behavior specialists as related service providers, not administrators, so they are not included in this administrative staffing comparison.

Administrative Positions

Administrative Positions in Comparable Districts

District	Director	Coordinators/Assistant Director/ Program Specialist (Administrator)	Program Specialists (Teacher)	Teacher on Special Assignment	Total
Alvord	1.0	1.0	4.0	0	6.0
Jurupa	1.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	6.0
Palm Springs	1.0	4.0	0	2.0	7.0
Val Verde	1.0	1.0	4.0	2.0	8.0
Average	1.0	2.0	2.5	1.25	6.75

Source: Data provided by individual districts.

The district's administrative structure at the director and coordinator level is consistent with that of the comparison districts. However, the district is understaffed by 0.5 FTE in program specialists on the teacher salary scale and by 0.25 FTE teachers on special assignment (TOSA) compared to other districts.

The director of education support services directly oversees special education and health services, and serves as the district's federal Section 504 coordinator. The coordinators of special education split responsibilities between preschool-elementary and secondary-nonpublic schools. They supervise the day-to-day operations of special education in their respective areas, and are the primary evaluators for all 1-to-1 instructional assistants (the school principals evaluate the instructional assistants assigned to teachers or classrooms for RSP and SDCs). FCMAT found that 80% of the preschool-elementary coordinator's time is spent in IEP meetings (45 meetings for district preschool students and 60-75 meetings for county-served students). This limits the coordinator's ability to provide program oversight, staff training and staff support.

The district's program specialists spend an average of at least 15 to 30 days each month attending IEP meetings as the administrative designee. This represents a significant portion of their time and is an indicator that principals are not acting as the primary administrators at IEP meetings. Although the program specialists are a valuable resource for the IEP team with their extensive knowledge of programs and services, they are not administrators. It is best practice for a principal to have the primary role as the administrator at an IEP meeting. Because of the extensive time spent in IEP meetings, the program specialists have little time for other essential duties such as program development, teacher support, and professional development for teachers and instructional assistants.

The district contract for program specialists is 194 days per year, which is fewer days than any of the comparison districts: Palm Springs contract is 202 days, Val Verde is 200 days, and Alvord is 205 days. These additional days are essential for special education departments to operate the required ESY program, build capacity by providing training and support for teachers and instructional assistants, and ensure overall program support.

The use of the TOSA position also varies among the comparison districts. The district uses the TOSA to provide augmentative and alternative communication support for individual students; Val Verde uses TOSAs as instructional coaches; and Palm Springs uses TOSAs to provide direct support for mild/moderate programs.

Clerical Support

As in the comparisons of administrative positions, each of the comparison districts uses different titles for comparable clerical positions, so some titles have been grouped together for this comparison.

Clerical Support Positions in Comparable Districts

Districts	Administrative Secretary	Secretary I, II, III	Clerk Typist/Office Specialist	Total
Alvord	1.0	1.0	7.0	9.0
Palm Springs	2.0	5.0	5.0	12.0
Val Verde	2.0	0	4.0	6.0
Jurupa	2.0	1.0	4.0	7.0
Average	1.75	1.75	5.0	8.5

Source: Data provided by individual districts.

Note: Clerical support titles vary by district.

The district's clerical support level is slightly lower than the average for comparable districts. The district is understaffed by 0.25 FTE administrative secretary positions, 0.75 FTE secretary positions, and 1.0 FTE clerk typist/office specialist position.

Staff indicated a concern that job-alike meetings are not scheduled consistently for all groups in the Education Support Services Department. These meetings are essential for staff, many of whom are often spread out across the district, to receive updates and trainings, solve difficult cases, and become more unified. FCMAT found that communication from the department is not consistent. Monthly job-alike meetings would increase communication and sense of connection that staff need with one another and with special education leaders.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Consider reducing the coordinator workload in the areas of IEP participation and evaluation of 1-to-1 instructional assistants, allowing more time and opportunities to provide program oversight, staff training, and staff support.
2. Consider increasing the number of days per year for program specialists to between 200 and 205 to allow them to support ESY, provide staffing training, and build capacity in the department.
3. Consider increasing program specialist staffing by 0.5 FTE to better match that of comparable districts.
4. Re-examine the use of a TOSA to provide direct services to students; consider assigning this position as an augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) specialist serving a defined population of students and carrying a designated caseload.
5. Consider adding 1.5 FTE of secretarial/clerical support.
6. Decrease the amount of time the program specialists are used as the administrative designee in IEP meetings, and change their work assignments to spend

more time on duties such as program development, training, and teacher support.

7. Assign principals as the administrative designee in IEP meetings for special education students on their campus.
8. Provide training and support for principals on their role as administrators at IEP meetings.
9. Consider having school principals evaluate 1-to-1 instructional assistants on their campus as they do other special education instructional assistants and personnel.
10. Ensure that job-alike meetings are scheduled for each school year for all groups of special education teachers and specialists.

Fiscal Considerations

The current special education funding structure was established by and is commonly referred to as Assembly Bill (AB) 602, which was introduced and signed into law in 1997 and became effective with the 1998-99 fiscal year.

Under AB 602, special education funding is based on the average daily attendance (ADA) of all students in a school district, regardless of the number of students served in special education programs or the cost to serve them. California distributes special education funds to SELPAs. The district is served by the Riverside County SELPA, which also serves 24 other districts and charter schools in Riverside County.

In addition to AB 602 state funding, districts/SELPA receive a small amount of federal funds. Neither source of funding is designed to support a standalone program; it is designed to supplement the general education program. Therefore, the combined state and federal financial resources are insufficient to cover even the most efficient and minimally funded special education programs. Local districts make contributions from local resources generated by all students, including special education students. This contribution is the amount of funding that a district must transfer from its unrestricted general fund to pay for the portion of special education costs that exceeds program revenues.

Special education financial reporting methods used by districts, county offices, and SELPAs can vary. For example, some districts include transportation and some do not. In addition, SELPAs vary in how they allocate funds. Therefore, it is not always possible to be precise when comparing a district's general fund contribution to that of other districts. However, if a general fund contribution is excessive relative to other districts or is increasing disproportionately compared to other costs, attention and action are likely warranted.

Federal statute requires districts to spend at least the same amount of state and local funds on special education services in each succeeding year. This requirement is commonly referred to as the maintenance of effort (MOE). There are limited exceptions to the MOE requirement, and if a district is considering reductions to its total general fund contribution to special education it is required to follow the MOE requirements (20 U.S.C.1413 (a)(2)(A)). The CDE lists the following as exceptions that allow the district to reduce the amount of state and local funds spent on special education:

1. Voluntary departure, by retirement or otherwise, or departure for just cause, of special education or related services personnel.
2. A decrease in the enrollment of children with disabilities.
3. The termination of the obligation of the agency to provide a program of special education to a particular child with a disability that is an exceptionally costly program, as determined by the State Educational Agency, because the child:
 - a. Has left the jurisdiction of the agency;
 - b. Has reached the age at which the obligation of the agency to provide free and appropriate public education to the child has terminated; or
 - c. No longer needs the program of special education.

4. The termination of costly expenditures for long-term purchases, such as the acquisition of equipment or the construction of school facilities.

Source: California Department of Education, Exempt Reductions to Maintenance of Effort, www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/as/documents/leamoeexempwrksht.xls

The district's MOE documents indicate that its general fund contribution was \$13,828,667, or 43% of its total special education expenditures, in 2014-15, and \$16,050,704, or 45% of total special education expenditures, in 2015-16. Thus the district's contribution to special education increased by \$2,222,027, or 16.1%, between 2014-15 and 2015-16. Preliminary numbers show that the general fund contribution may increase significantly in 2016-17 as well.

FCMAT also obtained special education contribution data from the comparison districts. This information is summarized in the table below.

Special Education Contribution Comparison

	Jurupa	Alvord	Val Verde	Palm Springs
2014-15 total contribution	\$13,828,667	\$14,356,647	\$9,827,173	\$8,948,937
2014-15 total expenses	\$31,922,867	\$31,583,498	\$29,972,164	\$38,553,179
2014-15 Gen. Fund contrib. %	43.3%	45.5%	32.8%	23.2%
2015-16 total contribution	\$16,050,704	\$17,357,702	\$10,742,762	\$12,030,738
2015-16 total expenses	\$35,582,505	\$35,073,790	\$32,943,820	\$43,009,516
2015-16 Gen. Fund contrib. %	45.1%	49.5%	32.6%	28.0%

Source: MOE documents from the comparison districts for 2014-15 and 2015-16.

The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) was enacted with the passage of the 2013-14 State Budget Act and replaced the previous K-12 finance system. The formula for school districts and charter schools is composed of uniform base grants by grade spans (K-3, 4-6, 7-8, and 9-12) and includes additional funding for certain student demographic groups.

Under the previous K-12 finance system, general education ADA funding generated by special day class attendance was transferred from the unrestricted general fund to the special education program. This ADA is no longer reported separately, and the CDE determined the transfer should no longer take place under the LCFF. Because of this, general fund contributions to special education can be higher but do not necessarily indicate increased adverse impacts on the district's resources.

Also effective in 2013-14, funding for special education transportation became an add-on to the LCFF and was fixed at 2012-13 levels. Because of this accounting change, MOE documents reviewed do not include the district's general fund contribution to special education transportation; however, documents indicate the district's general fund contribution for transportation would increase its total contribution to 52% of total special education expenditures in 2014-15 and 53% in 2015-16. The contribution to special education transportation was \$2,614,811 in 2014-15 and \$2,927,956 in 2015-16, an increase of 12.0% in one year.

Several factors affect a district's general fund contribution, including revenue received to operate the programs; expenditures for salaries, benefits, staffing and caseloads; nonpublic school and nonpublic agency costs; and transportation. Litigation can also increase a district's general fund contribution. As is the case with any district's budget as a whole, most of the district's special education costs are for employee salaries and benefits. As the district has negotiated higher salary

and benefit contributions for its employees, special education costs have also increased. The district's recent negotiations may have been based on several factors related to the overall state budget and funding to local educational agencies (LEAs); however, special education funding provided by the state has only been adjusted by the state-adopted cost of living adjustment (COLA). This creates an environment in which special education personnel costs are increasing at a much higher rate than special education revenues, forcing the district to increase its general fund contribution to cover the difference.

According to the March 2015 report of California's statewide task force on special education titled, *One System: Reforming Education to Serve ALL Students* (<http://www.smcoe.org/assets/files/about-smcoe/superintendents-office/statewide-special-education-task-force/Task%20Force%20Report%205.18.15.pdf>), the statewide average general fund contribution to special education is 43% of a local educational agency's (LEA's) total special education expenditures. The California Legislative Analyst's Office's *2017-18 Budget: Proposition 98 Education Analysis* dated February 9, 2017 states that as of 2014-15, "state and federal categorical funding covers about 40 percent of special education costs in California. Schools cover remaining special education costs with unrestricted funding (mostly) LCFF." This means the statewide average unrestricted general fund contribution has increased to approximately 60% for the 2014-15 year, which places the district's contribution below the statewide average.

School districts throughout the state face a continuing challenge in funding the costs for serving special education students. The difference between the federal and state funding provided and the mandated costs for these services continues to increase. Because special education funding is based on total districtwide ADA, it is important to monitor attendance and attendance rates of all students districtwide.

The district's special education revenue, for which the district provided data to FCMAT, was posted to the district's special education program in its financial system. Between 2014-15 and 2015-16 the revenue the district received for special education decreased by \$308,522, or 2.8%. Although monitoring revenue sources for special education is always advisable, interviews with district personnel and with personnel of neighboring districts indicated no dissatisfaction with the SELPA's methods for allocating funds to member districts.

The table below shows the district's special education expenditures. The data is based on the MOE documents provided to FCMAT. From 2014-15 to 2015-16 the district's special education expenditures, including for transportation, increased by \$3,276,652, or 12.0%. Salaries and employer-paid benefits are the largest components of the increase. Certificated employee salaries have increased by 9.9%, classified employee salaries have increased by 18.6%, and employer-paid benefits have increased by 29.8% during this same time period. A portion of the increase has been in the special education programs because of settled contract negotiations, including employer-paid health insurance contribution increases, and mandated increase in CalSTRS and CalPERS employer contribution rates. Staff have been added as well. Contracted services, which include nonpublic agencies and nonpublic school placements, decreased by 1.2% during the same time period.

Special Education Expenditures from 2014-15 and 2015-16*

	2014-15	2015-16	Change	% Change
Certificated Salaries	\$11,758,374	\$12,919,321	\$1,160,947	9.9%
Classified Salaries	\$4,311,781	\$5,111,797	\$800,016	18.6%
Benefits	\$4,945,055	\$6,419,146	\$1,474,091	29.8%
Materials and Supplies	\$391,047	\$306,350	(\$84,698)	-21.7%
Contracts and Operating	\$5,733,509	\$5,665,289	(\$68,220)	-1.2%
Capital Outlay	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Debt Service	\$2,067	\$2,067	\$0	0.0%
Sub-Total, Direct Costs	\$27,141,833	\$30,423,971	\$3,282,138	12.1%
Indirect Charges	\$51,356	\$45,870	(\$5,486)	-10.7%
Total, Expenditures	\$27,193,189	\$30,469,841	\$3,276,652	12.0%

Source: MOE documents

Rounding used in calculations

*Excludes the Program Cost Report Allocation.

The district's expenditure documents show that several categories of expenses, including special education transportation and the salary of the educational support services director, were coded to general education Standardized Account Code Structure (SACS) resource codes; however, the correct special education SACS goal codes were used. It is best practice to use special education SACS resource codes for special education expenditures to ensure accurate contribution amounts are calculated.

The table below shows the district's December 1 identified special education pupil counts for 2014-15 and 2015-16 and the expenditures per identified pupil. From 2014-15 to 2015-16 the count increased by 28 pupils, or 1.4%, and the expenditures per pupil have increased by \$1,644, or 11.8%.

Description	2014-15	2015-16	Change	Change %
Identified Pupil Count	2,053	2,081	28	1.4%
Expenditures per Pupil	\$13,875	\$15,519	\$1,644	11.8%

Source: district MOE documents

Position control is essential for school district budgeting because typically 85% to 90% of a school district's costs are for personnel. A strong position control system allows control and management of the budget, reduces the risk of improper reconciliation of authorized positions, allows more accurate reporting, and provides improved information about a district's positions and vacancies.

Staff reported that the district uses three systems to track special education personnel: a report generated by the Education Support Services Department from SEIS (the Special Education Information System), a FileMaker database maintained by the Personnel Department, and the Galaxy financial system used by the Business Services Department and payroll. The use of three different systems has resulted in the following:

- A lack of a systematic process in the Education Support Services Department to use the SEIS-recorded services information to determine the total need by type of service, by site, and for the district.
- Duplicate entries in FileMaker and Galaxy, leading to potentially inaccurate data.
- A lack of consistent reconciliation among the three systems as required for effective position control.

Staff reported that the Education Support Services Department takes an active role in personnel allocation as part of the site allocation performed in May each year. However, there is no systematic review during the year to ensure proper site personnel allocations. In addition, multiple employees indicated that the district has no consistent, independent system for comparing invoices from nonpublic schools and agencies with services delivered to ensure accuracy before authorizing accounts payable to issue payment.

The existing accounts payable process appears to use best practices to verify terms and sufficiency of funds available on the corresponding purchase order, but not for validation that services being invoiced and paid for were actually delivered. An education support services administrator authorizes invoices, but a system needs to be implemented to verify the accuracy of invoices before payment is authorized.

The district does not show evidence of performing a cost benefit analysis to determine if it would be efficacious to bring programs run by the SELPA, the Riverside County Office of Education, or an NPS or NPA back into the district as district-operated programs. One example of this is the Spectrum program for autistic children. The district provides free facilities for the program and pays an outside NPS to deliver services. Performing a rate analysis on this program would allow the district to compare rates paid to the NPS to rates for similar services when a contractor provides the facility, and to the cost of the district providing the services rather than the NPS doing so.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Continue to monitor its general fund contribution to special education.
2. Consider assigning all special education expenditures to special education SACS resource codes to more efficiently monitor the general fund contribution to special education.
3. Implement a strong position control system, and consider moving position control to the Business Services Department for budgeting purposes.
 - a. Ensure that the Education Support Services Department performs a systematic review of data produced by SEIS to determine and group services needed by type of service, by site, and districtwide.
 - b. Change to using the Galaxy financial system for all position control functions.
 - c. Schedule and hold monthly meetings of the Education Support Services, Personnel and Payroll departments to reconcile position control information.

4. Request that the Education Support Services Department perform regular reviews of the special education personnel assigned to and the services performed at each site. Reconcile this information with SEIS reports of personnel and services required by IEPs.
5. Request that the Education Support Services Department use information from recommendation #4 above to check resources available before submitting requests for additional personnel or services.
6. Implement a strong internal control system to verify that services for which it is billed are being provided.
7. Use cost benefit analysis to justify decisions about program operations.

Appendix

Study Agreement



FCMAT

FISCAL CRISIS & MANAGEMENT
ASSISTANCE TEAM

CSIS California School Information Services

FISCAL CRISIS & MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM STUDY AGREEMENT December 6, 2016

The Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT), hereinafter referred to as the team, and the Jurupa Unified School District, hereinafter referred to as the district, mutually agree as follows:

1. BASIS OF AGREEMENT

The team provides a variety of services to local education agencies (LEAs). The district has requested that the team assign professionals to study specific aspects of the district's 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.

In keeping with the provisions of Assembly Bill 1200, the county superintendent will be notified of this agreement between the district and FCMAT and will receive a copy of the final report. The final report will also be published on the FCMAT website.

2. SCOPE OF THE WORK

A. Scope and Objectives of the Study

1. Review the district's implementation of Student Success Teams, Response to Intervention, and Multi-Tiered System of Supports, and make recommendations for improvement, if any.
2. Analyze special education teacher staffing ratios and class and caseload sizes using statutory requirements for mandated services and statewide guidelines, and make recommendations for improvement, if any.
3. Review the efficiency of staffing allocations of special education paraeducators, including classroom and 1-to-1 paraeducators, and make recommendations for improvement, if any. Review the procedures for identifying the need for paraeducators and the processes for monitoring the assignments of paraeducators and determining the need for continued support from year to year.

4. Analyze staffing and caseloads for related service providers including, but not limited to, speech pathologists, psychologists, occupational/physical therapists, behavior specialists, adaptive physical education, and other staff who provide designated instructional services (DIS), and make recommendations for improvement, if any.
5. Determine whether the district is overidentifying students as eligible for special education services compared to the statewide average, and make recommendations that will reduce over identification, if needed.
6. Analyze whether the district provides a continuum of special education and related services for students from preschool through age 22, including student placements in the least restrictive environments, and make recommendations for improvement, if any.
7. Review the organizational structure and staffing of the special education department in the district's central office to determine whether its clerical and administrative support, programs and functions are aligned with those of districts of comparable size and structure, and make recommendations for greater efficiencies, if needed.
8. Review the district's unrestricted general fund contribution to special education and make recommendations for greater efficiency, if any.

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 team's procedures and 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. Exit Meeting - 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 – Approximately 10 days after the exit meeting, the team will issue an exit letter briefly memorializing the topics discussed in the exit meeting.
5. Draft Report - Electronic copies of a preliminary draft report will be delivered to the district's administration for review and comment.

6. Final Report - Electronic copies of the final report will be delivered to the district's administration and to the county superintendent following completion of the review. Printed copies are available from FCMAT upon request.
7. Follow-Up Support – If requested by the district within six to 12 months after completion of the study, FCMAT will return to the district at no cost to assess the district's progress in implementing the recommendations included in the report. Progress in implementing the recommendations will be documented to the district in a FCMAT management letter. FCMAT will work with the district on a mutually convenient time to return for follow-up support that is no sooner than eight months and no later than 18 months after completion of the study.

3. **PROJECT PERSONNEL**

The study team will be supervised by Michael H. Fine, Chief Administrative Officer, Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team, Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office. The study team may also include:

<i>A. To be determined</i>	<i>FCMAT Staff</i>
<i>B. To be determined</i>	<i>FCMAT Consultant</i>
<i>C. To be determined</i>	<i>FCMAT Consultant</i>
<i>D. To be determined</i>	<i>FCMAT Consultant</i>
<i>E. To be determined</i>	<i>FCMAT Consultant</i>

4. **PROJECT COSTS**

The cost for studies requested pursuant to Education Code (EC) 42127.8(d)(1) shall be as follows:

- A. \$500 per day for each staff member while on site, conducting fieldwork at other locations, presenting reports and participating in meetings. The cost of independent FCMAT consultants will be billed at their actual daily rate for all work performed.
- B. All out-of-pocket expenses, including travel, meals and lodging.
- C. 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 the district's acceptance of the final report.

Based on the elements noted in section 2A, the total not-to-exceed cost of the study will be \$39,200.

- D. Any change to the scope will affect the estimate of total cost.

Payments for FCMAT's 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 during on-site reviews.
- B. The district will provide the following if requested:
 - 1. Policies, regulations and prior reports that address the study scope.
 - 2. Current or proposed organizational charts.
 - 3. Current and two prior years' audit reports.
 - 4. Any documents requested on a supplemental list. Documents requested on the supplemental list should be provided to FCMAT only in electronic format; if only hard copies are available, they should be scanned by the district and sent to FCMAT in electronic format.
 - 5. Documents should be provided in advance of fieldwork; any delay in the receipt of the requested documents may affect the start date and/or completion date of the project. Upon approval of the signed study agreement, access will be provided to FCMAT's online SharePoint document repository, where the district will upload all requested documents.
- C. The district's administration will review a preliminary draft copy of the report resulting from 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 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 different phases of the study and will be established upon the receipt of a signed study agreement:

Orientation:	to be determined
Staff Interviews:	to be determined
Exit Meeting:	to be determined
Draft Report Submitted:	to be determined
Final Report Submitted:	to be determined
Board Presentation:	to be determined, if requested
Follow-Up Support:	if requested

7. COMMENCEMENT, TERMINATION AND COMPLETION OF WORK

FCMAT will begin work as soon as it has assembled an available and appropriate study team consisting of FCMAT staff and independent consultants, taking into consideration other jobs FCMAT has previously undertaken and assignments from the state. The team will work expeditiously to complete its work and deliver its report, subject to the cooperation of the district and any other parties from which, in the team's judgment, it must obtain information. Once the team has completed its fieldwork, it will proceed to prepare a preliminary draft report and a final report. Prior to completion of field work, the district may terminate its request for service and will be responsible for all costs incurred by FCMAT to the date of termination under Section 4 (Project Costs). If the district does not provide written notice of termination prior to completion of fieldwork, the team will complete its work and deliver its report and the district will be responsible for the full costs. The district understands and agrees that FCMAT is a state agency and all FCMAT reports are published on the FCMAT website and made available to interested parties in state government. In the absence of extraordinary circumstances, FCMAT will not withhold preparation, publication and distribution of a report once fieldwork has been completed, and the district shall not request that it do so.

8. INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR

FCMAT is an independent contractor and is not an employee or engaged in any manner with the district. The manner in which FCMAT's services are rendered shall be within its sole control and discretion. FCMAT representatives are not authorized to speak for, represent, or obligate the district in any manner without prior express written authorization from an officer of the district.

9. INSURANCE


During the term of this agreement, FCMAT shall maintain liability insurance of not less than \$1 million unless otherwise agreed upon in writing by the district, automobile liability insurance in the amount required under California state law, and workers compensation as required under California state law. FCMAT shall provide certificates of insurance, with Jurupa Unified School District named as additional insured, indicating applicable insurance coverages upon request.

10. HOLD HARMLESS


FCMAT shall hold the district, its board, officers, agents and employees harmless from all suits, claims and liabilities resulting from negligent acts or omissions of its board, officers, agents and employees undertaken under this agreement. Conversely, the district shall hold FCMAT, its board, officers, agents and employees harmless from all suits, claims and liabilities resulting from negligent acts or omissions of its board, officers, agents and employees undertaken under this agreement.

11. CONTACT PERSON

Name: Paula Ford, Assistant Superintendent
Telephone: (951) 360-4157
E-mail: pford@jUSD.k12.ca.us

 19 Dec 16

Elliott Duchon, Superintendent Date
Jurupa Unified School District

 December 6, 2016

Michael H. Fine, Date
Chief Administrative Officer
Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team