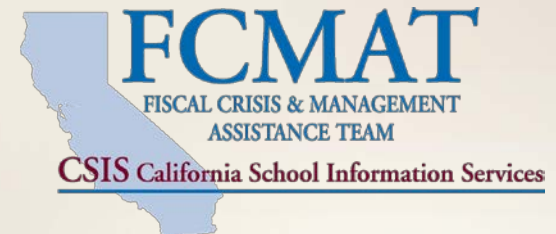


Beverly Hills Unified School District Special Education Review

- **Presented to:**
Beverly Hills Unified School District Board of Education
January 15, 2019
- **Presented by:**
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Fiscal Crisis & Management Assistance Team

- FCMAT was established by legislation in accordance with Assembly Bill 1200 in 1992 as a service to assist local educational agencies in complying with fiscal accountability standards.
- FCMAT provides both management assistance and fiscal crisis intervention.
- FCMAT is an external, state agency.

Scope of Work

- Conduct a review of the district's special education program and organization in the following areas:
 - General Education Academic Support (SST/RtI²/MTSS)
 - Special Education Staffing, Caseloads and Aide Support
 - Related Service Provider Staffing
 - Identification Rates
 - Continuum of Services
 - Nonpublic Schools and Agencies
 - Organizational Structure
 - Due Process and Litigation
 - Fiscal Considerations
- Make recommendations as warranted

Approach

- FCMAT makes findings and develops recommendations based on the triangulation of information. Findings are not reached or based on one piece of information.
- The source of information is through a comprehensive review of documents, state information and confidential interviews.
- FCMAT uses a deficit model in preparing our findings and recommendations. We focus on the gaps, and don't usually highlight the good work.

Approach (continued)

- FCMAT prepared a document request list aligned with the scope of work.
 - Examples include: organizational charts, financial reports, position control and staffing reports, CASEMIS reports, job descriptions, annual performance report measures, policy, collective bargaining agreement, classes by school, staffing formulas, program descriptions, RtI²/MTSS plans and procedures, SELPA handbook on range of services, and NPS and NPA placements and cost data.

Approach (continued)

- Based on scope and organizational structure, FCMAT conducted interviews.
 - Questions are asked pertaining to policies and procedures, job duties, and responsibilities and training.
 - The same person is often interviewed multiple times, each by a different FCMAT team member, with questions varying based on scope.
 - Interviews are confidential. FCMAT does not normally attribute certain information to a specific person or job title, but often says, “Interviews of staff indicated ...”

Findings & Recommendations

General Education Academic Support

- Identification of special needs is significantly influenced by the district's implementation of Student Study Teams (SSTs), Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI²) and Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).
 - Much initial thought and work has been done in all of these areas; however, no effective system has been implemented.
 - Site-based decisions and differences lead to different approaches with students.

General Education Academic Support

The district should:

- #1 – Implement a consistent districtwide SST system with Ed Services leading and monitoring the process and procedures.
- #2 – Update board policies and SST handbook, require regular training for all staff responsible for the SST process and annually train teachers on appropriate SST referrals and follow-through.
- #6 – Ensure site administration consistently utilize the SST process to provide support for struggling students.
- #9 – Consider implementing RtI² and MTSS through a districtwide committee, provide intensive training for all staff with the training outlined in a strategic plan.

Partial list of recommendations; consult the report for the complete list.

Special Education Staffing, Caseloads and Aide Support

- FCMAT was provided several documents related to staffing assignments, several inconsistencies existed.
- No established process for allocating RSP aide support, both environmental and 1-to-1 aides.
- Every district has unique factors to consider in determining staffing. A snapshot of staffing indicates:
 - Preschool aide support is overstaffed by 2.2 FTE (6-hr)
 - RSP is overstaffed across all grade spans
 - RSP environmental aide support is slightly understaffed (although this program had an additional 19.6 FTE 1-to-1 aide support)

Special Education Staffing, Caseloads and Aide Support

- SDC (Mild/Moderate) for K-1 was overstaffed by 1.4 FTE aide
- SDC Prime staffing
 - K-8: teacher staffing within industry standard and aide support is overstaffed by 4.1 FTE
 - High school – 22 yrs: caseload just above industry standard and environmental aide support is understaffed by 1.0 FTE aide (although this program had an additional 4.25 FTE 1-to-1 aide support)

Special Education Staffing, Caseloads and Aide Support

The district should:

- #1 – Establish one document to use for staffing reconciliation and position control between the Special Ed., Business Services and HR departments.
- #5 – Define the RSP/inclusion program and services to ensure all students' needs are met in the least restrictive environment
- #9 – Consider students who may require more supports and services districtwide and increase offerings of mild/moderate SDC
- #11 – Adopt and implement a comprehensive SCIA procedure and provide training

Partial list of recommendations; consult the report for the complete list.

Related Service Provider Staffing

- School Psychologists
 - FTE counts adjusted for unique assignments (0.2 FTE preschool and 2 FTE interns not included)
 - Above state average K-12 caseload by 1.25 FTE
- Speech and Language Pathologists
 - 1.0 FTE SLPA not included in the staffing ratio
 - Slightly under Ed Code caseload ratios for K-12
 - Slightly under Ed Code caseload ratios for preschool

Related Service Provider Staffing

- Adaptive PE Teacher
 - Slightly under industry standard caseload ratios
- Occupational Therapists
 - 0.6 FTE COTA not included in the staffing ratio
 - At industry standard caseload ratios
- Board Certified Behavior Analyst
 - No industry standard
- School Nurses
 - Above industry standard caseload ratios

Related Service Provider Staffing

The district should:

- #1 – Consider reducing psychologists or add responsibilities to support RtI² development.
- #2 – Redirect the correct SLP resource funding from preschool to the K-22 funding source for the seven K-1 students served by the preschool SLP.
- #8 – Consider credentialed nurse staffing increase of 0.66 FTE

Partial list of recommendations; consult the report for the complete list.

Identification Rates

- Identification Rates
 - 2016-17: 13.0%
 - 2017-18: 12.9%
 - Statewide average: 10.7%
- District (D) and State (S) Comparison by Disability
 - Other Health Impairment: D: 15.9% and S: 12.0%
 - Autism: D: 17.0% and S: 13.2%
- Largest district increase in the last year was in the category of specific learning disability (+2.1%)
- 504 identification rates are on the rise
 - 2016-17: 2.9%
 - 2017-18: 3.5%

Identification Rates

The district should:

- #2 – Track types of referrals, assessments and eligibility rates to help monitor various annual trends.
- #3 – Examine the determining factors of eligibility for other health impairments, specific learning disabilities, and 504 plans; consider other supports before special education such as health plans and Rtl².
- #4 – Investigate ways to serve students before identification or to remediate, support and potentially exit them from special education.

Partial list of recommendations; consult the report for the complete list.

Continuum of Services; Least Restrictive Environment

- 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.
- The district's general service delivery model focuses on push-in and co-teach in grades K-8, co-teach and one mild/moderate class at the high school level, and five moderate/severe classes for preschool – 12+.
- Few options exist in the district for students needing more intensive services than can be provided in the gen. ed. setting, which could lead to more NPS placements or students being inadequately served.

Continuum of Services; Least Restrictive Environment

- The district has made some progress towards compliance with federal requirements to increase LRE for preschool students.
- FCMAT asked the district to monitor the LRE for students ages 6-22 because their percentage of students in a separate setting was just below the target in 2015-16.
- Lack of program delivery options available in the district limits students with more intense academic needs, behavioral needs, and intense medical needs and often are placed in more restrictive and expensive environments through NPS placements.

Continuum of Services; Least Restrictive Environment

The district should:

- #1 – Evaluate placement of preschool students placed in the SDC at Beverly Vista and determine if there's less restrictive settings for this age group.
- #3 – Evaluate providing more intense SAI in more supportive settings beyond second grade.
- #4 – Develop a committee led by the Student Services Department to evaluate the effectiveness of the co-teach model and provide professional development for all teachers implementing a co-teach model for students with and without disabilities.

Continuum of Services; Least Restrictive Environment

The district should:

- #5 – Utilize this committee to evaluate the implementation of a learning center model for students with and without disabilities.
- #11 – Review the cost of out-of-district placements and the incidence of students with moderate/severe needs who are not making adequate progress in district services.
Determine if student benefit and potential cost savings could be achieved by developing district moderate/severe services for specific special education populations such as students on the autism spectrum and those with emotional disturbance.

Partial list of recommendations; consult the report for the complete list.

Nonpublic Schools and Agencies

- Nonpublic schools (NPS) is considered an option in the continuum of service for students with unique requirements for specialized programs that are unavailable in the district.
- Student numbers for NPS have fluctuated and had decreased in 2017-18 at the time of our visit.
- The district utilizes nonpublic agencies (NPAs) for a variety of needs, including staffing for areas such as speech, OT, PT, nursing and autism support.
- For budget and financial reporting purposes, the business office combines the NPS and NPA expenses. Separating these costs, through a separate SACS object or goal code, would allow administration to monitor and track expenditures to make informed decisions.

Nonpublic Schools and Agencies

The district should:

- #6 – Consider separating costs for nonpublic schools and agencies for budget and reporting purposes.
- #7 – Recruit and secure speech pathologists, occupational and physical therapists.
- #9 – Develop strategies to decrease NPA costs through the provision of services in district programs.

Partial list of recommendations; consult the report for the complete list.

Organizational Structure

- Used similar K-12 unified school districts for comparison based on enrollment, free and reduced-price meal counts, English learner population and students with disabilities.
 - La Canada, Oak Park and South Pasadena USDs
 - Administrative management and clerical support:
BHUSD 6 (one admin. position vacant at time of the study)
Average excluding BHUSD 3
- Functionality – special education procedural handbook was lacking. The assistant superintendent had started working with staff on developing the handbook with fall as the target date for implementation.

Organizational Structure

The district should:

- #1 – Finalize the development of the new procedural handbook.
- #2 – Ensure that there is a sequence of professional development activities for site administrators and all staff on the use of the new handbook.

Partial list of recommendations; consult the report for the complete list.

Due Process and Litigation

- When disputes arise over the identification, assessment, educational placement or the provision of a FAPE, steps are outlined in the procedural safeguards regarding efforts to resolve disagreements at the lowest level (EC 56500.3).
- The district makes every effort to resolve disputes at the lowest level; disputes are over the provision of FAPE and are initiated by parents over concerns of inappropriate programs for their child.
- Past administration would roll over settlement agreements and carry forward the NPS expenditures from year to year.

Due Process and Litigation

The district should:

- #2 – Develop district protocol and procedures for the re-evaluation through the IEP process and all NPS cases each year before automatically rolling the placement and costs into the next year.
- #3 – Determine the feasibility of creating district programs that meet the FAPE requirements of federal law.

Partial list of recommendations; consult the report for the complete list.

Fiscal Considerations

- General Fund Contribution
 - 2015-16: 62.1%
 - 2016-17: 63.6%
 - 2017-18: 70.5% (budget)
 - Statewide average: 64.5% - this was the most recent analysis published (2016-17)
- Expenditure increases are driven in large part by district-wide decisions regarding compensation.

Fiscal Considerations

The district should:

- #2 - Implement a strong position control system, and consider moving position control to the Business Services Department for budgeting purposes.
 - Schedule and hold monthly meetings of the Special Education, Human Resources and Business Services departments to reconcile position control information.

Partial list of recommendations; consult the report for the complete list.

Questions & Answers