

Special Education Cost Drivers and Innovative Approaches in Maine Schools

Dr. Kathryn Hawes
Superintendent of Schools, RSU 21
Adjunct Professor of Special Education Law
khawes@rsu21.net

Cost Drivers MEPRI - July 2016

2 Trends

1. Overall increase in percentage of students identified for special education
 - a. Decrease in Speech / Language Impairments and Emotional Disability
 - b. Increase in "lower incidence" / higher needs disabilities
2. Overall increase in students being mainstreamed in the regular education classroom for more than 80% of the school day

Cost Drivers MADSEC - March 2016

4 Cost Drivers

1. 1:1 Support in the mainstream by an Ed Tech
2. "Push-in" Special Education Teachers
3. Intensity of needs (autism, poverty, etc.)
4. Weighing the provision of desired services against potential litigation

Cost Drivers Common Themes

- Increased identification rates
- Increased costs for mainstreaming
- Increased numbers of students with significant needs
- Increased costs due to the threat of litigation

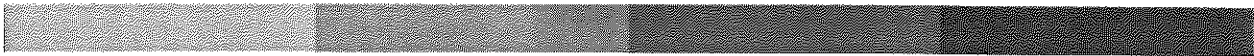
How did we get here?

Before 1975, nearly 1 million students with disabilities were either not served or poorly served by U.S. schools

"Civil Rights Era" - Laws developed to solve issues of injustice

President Ford's Signing Statement for the 1975 *Education for All Handicapped Children* raised cautions and concerns with the hope for amendments and revisions before fully effective 3 years later. Congress never revised

Where are we now?



Currently 13-14% of students in U.S. public schools receive special education (ranging 9-18% based upon the state)

Only group of students and parents in our schools who have an individually enforceable federal entitlement to services

Estimated 21-40% of our education budget

The Outcomes

Plus

Currently 13-14% of students in U.S. public schools receive special education (ranging 9-18% based upon the state)

Delta

Revised 5 times, growing complexity, increased exposure to litigation

Policy Considerations

State regulations cannot lessen federal regulations. However, when you look at MUSER, we have a lot of state language that is above and beyond the federal law (state language is italicized).

Maine has a highly successful Due Process Mediation Program. If built upon, that could help deter high cost litigation.

Three levels of need

Students who are identified as special education but have placements in regular education settings

FY 15 - \$17,193 (59% of identified students)

Students who are identified as special education but have placements in resource education settings

FY 15 - 8,550 (30% of identified students)

Students who have placements in self-contained classrooms

FY 15 - 3,202 (11% of identified students)

Placement in Regular Education Settings - 59%

Inclusion is a philosophy, not a research-based strategy

Inclusion was born from the civil rights era

IDEA calls for the "least restrictive environment"

Is mainstreaming with a 1:1 or teacher push-in least restrictive? Most effective?

Both MEPRI and MADSEC have identified it as a cost-driver.

What skills are students lacking to be independent? Are we teaching those skills?

How are we preparing them for post-secondary work or education?

MSAD 51 Innovative Approach to In-Class Support

Form, Guidelines, Process

The utilization of supplementary support services:

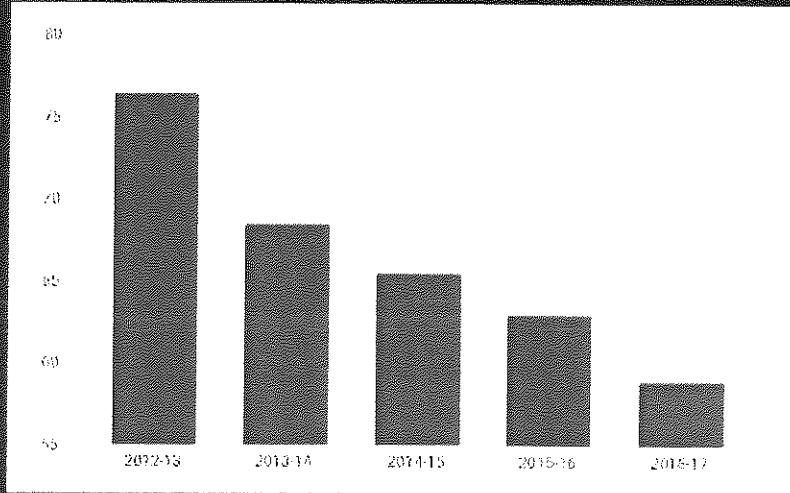
1. should be considered a highly restrictive intervention;
2. should be considered only if the student has demonstrated an inability to acquire skills in a group situation or generalize skills across multiple settings as evidenced by data;
3. is to promote the student's independence and expedite/accelerate development that will lead to the student generalizing IEP goals and objectives.

MSAD 51 Sample IEP Goal

By April 2018, given specially designed instruction and regular ed accommodations, student will increase the amount of time that he spends in the regular education environment per day without additional adult support to an average of 50% in order to access social and educational opportunities with his typically developing peers as measured by informal observations and data collection.

Outcomes

MSAD 51 - In Class Support



Policy Considerations

Early Intervention

Consider a state process / form for determining and evaluating the need for in-class adult support (state forms were very helpful in reducing and clarifying identification of Speech / Language and Emotional Disabilities)

Expect clear criteria, measurable goals, and timelines for transition when IEP teams order in class support or instruction

Placement in Resource Settings - 30%

We have locally developed RTI or MTSS systems

We are in an era of proficiency-based learning, research-driven curricula, data-rich accountability

We have increased local-control opportunities under ESEA

Why do we have more flexibility to determine intervention for students in RTI than those in special education?

Why do we provide more close data collection and review in RTI (every 6 weeks)?

Why is it that our local dispute resolution systems are adequate for all students except those in special education?

Gorham School District - Innovative Approach

- Prior to RTI approximately 35-40% of students referred were not identified each year
- In our district, this translated to about 35 students per year
- Each comprehensive evaluation costs \$3,000 and 40 hours of professional time (testing, observing, meeting, etc.)
- We realized these resources could be otherwise used to support teaching and learning

Approach

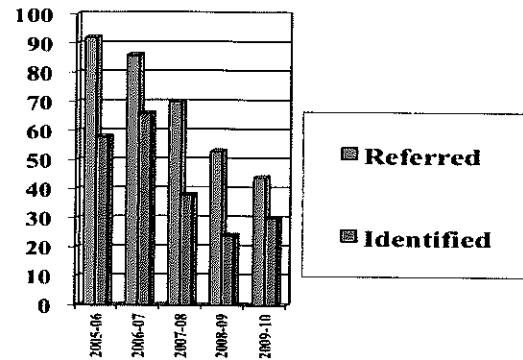
Reallocated for Instructional Coaches in each school

Created a combined services model

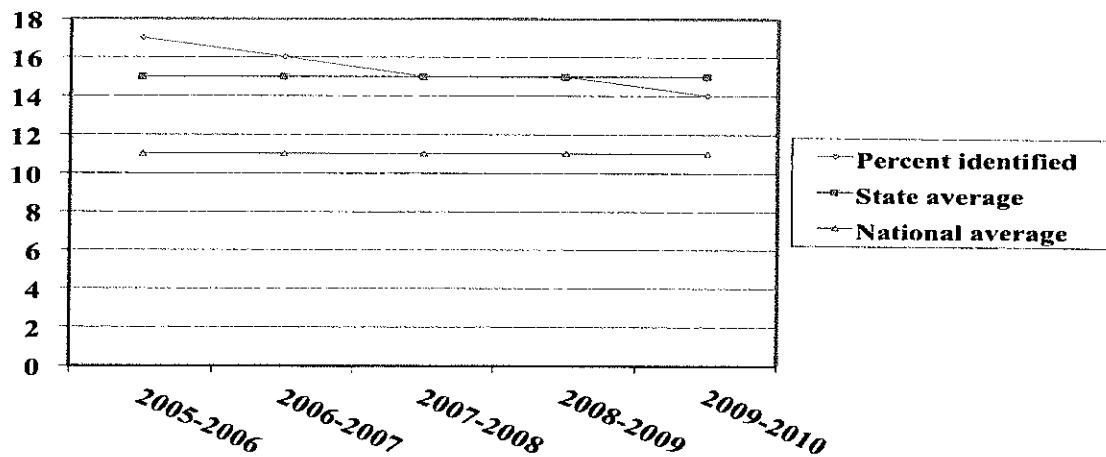
Decreased special education referral rates by 50% per year

Increased % of referrals that led to identification from 33-68%

Outcomes



Identification Rate Trends Gorham School District



Results

Better programming
and improved student
achievement

Perception of services
for students by other
students as more
natural and less
stigmatizing

Reduction of 3
teaching positions and
21 educational
technician positions
over 3 years

Policy Considerations

Early Intervention and the “30-million word gap”

Re-shape RTI or MTSS as a general education system

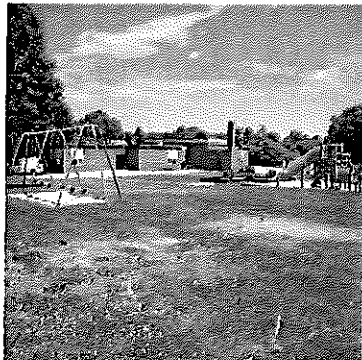
Consider Instructional Coaches in EPS

Placement in Self-Contained Settings - 11%

This population will likely continue to grow as autism rates increase and we begin to see the effects of the Opioid Crisis on children born with addiction, those living with addiction, and those coping with addiction.

How can we prepare our schools to meet the needs of these students with limited high-cost placements?

Innovative Approach Public Regional Collaborative Programs



Our Vision

The Sebago Educational Alliance (SEA) Regional Day Treatment Program provides evidence-based academic instruction within a milieu of integrated behavioral / social / emotional supports. Day Treatment teaching staff and mental health staff are equipped with skills to provide positive behavior supports to students as they work through an aligned curriculum, learning skills that will help lead to their transition back to a less restrictive environment.

Policy Considerations

Early Intervention

Provide incentives and supports for public school collaboratives like Sebago Educational Alliance

Review MaineCare billing restrictions

Review MaineCare "Seed" model through EPS (2-year delay)

Questions and Comments



Flow Chart for Educational Technician Support

Please use the following process if there is a student requiring an educational technician or a student requiring an increase in educational technician support.

Step 1- Student's team completes "Guidelines for Consideration of Educational Technician Support Services" and discusses next steps. Linked here- [Guidelines for Consideration of Ed Tech Support Services](#)

Here is a PDF form for your review [PDF of form](#). Please complete this form ONLINE for data collection purposes.

Step 2- If step 1 indicates a need for more data, please complete the "Educational Technician School Day Analysis Form" for a minimum of two school days. Please work with building administration and instructional strategists to determine who will be gathering this data. Please note that any member of the student's team can gather data. Additionally, more than one set of eyes might be helpful. Linked here- [Ed Tech Analysis Form](#)

Step 3- Case managers and building administration review data and determine need for additional adult support. If additional support is needed outline time of day/specific activities as well as a goal/fading plan designed to reduce the dependency and eliminate the need for individualized support in each area.

Step 4- After administration discussion of all data, convene an IEP meeting to amend the IEP.

Guidelines for Consideration of Educational Technician Support Services

This checklist is to be used as a tool for schools to collect and analyze data and to discuss if more information is needed in order for the IEP team to determine if supplementary Ed Tech support services are needed.

The utilization of supplementary support services:

- should be considered a highly restrictive intervention;
- should be considered only if the student has demonstrated an inability to acquire skills in a group situation or generalize skills across multiple settings as evidenced by data;
- is to promote the student's independence and expedite/accelerate development that will lead to the student generalizing IEP goals and objectives.

* Please do not use your browser's back button while filling out this survey. It will delete all the information entered. Also, it is recommended that you type your summary data on a Google Doc then copy and paste the information into this form. If the summary information is lengthy, you can put the url to the Google Doc in this form.

Your username (**dgreen@msad51.org**) will be recorded when you submit this form. Not **dgreen?**

[Sign out](#)

* Required

1. First name of student *

.....

2. Last name of student *

.....

3. School *

Mark only one oval.

- MIW
- GMS 4-5
- GMS 6-8
- GHS
- Other

4. **Grade ***

Mark only one oval.

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12

A. Functional Life Skills

5. **Is the student having severe difficulties with functional life skills? ***

Mark only one oval.

- yes
- no *Skip to question 13.*

A. Functional Life Skills Concerns

6. **A1. What type of support does the student need in order to be successful in the following areas? Check the appropriate boxes. ***

Mark only one oval per row.

	Independent	Adult prompts	Physical support	Other supports	N/A
Toileting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mobility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eating	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dressing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self-care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please explain in comment box below)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Comment

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

8. A2. Has data been collected consistently for at least 10 days on the student's functional life skills? *

Mark only one oval.

- If YES, please summarize data below
- If NO, continue the student's current educational program and collect relevant data.

9. Summarize data that identifies the student's skill level on each area of concern.

Include a description of what the student currently can do, in what settings, and how often the student will attempt the skill. (example: student does not have bladder control and must have diaper changed at least hourly throughout the school day)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

10. A3. Are visual supports in place for skills that require prompting? *

Mark only one oval.

- If YES, list visual supports that are in place for skills that require prompting (below).
- If NO, assign a team member to review the possibility of increasing mini schedules or visual supports for the student in each of the areas listed in FL1.

11. List below visual supports that are in place for skills that require prompting.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

12. A4. Summary of Functional Life Skill needs *

*Specialized physical health care plan or emergency plan.
Check all that apply.

- G-tube feeding*
- Medication*
- Suctioning*
- Food preparation
- Diaper changing
- Feeding-full support
- Seizures*
- Lift/Transfers
- N/A
- Other:

B. Communication

13. Are there concerns regarding the student's communication skills? *

(i.e., pragmatics, receptive language, expressive language, articulation, hearing)
Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No *Skip to question 23.*

B. Communication Concerns

This section is to be completed with input from the special education teacher, speech pathologist and others with relevant knowledge and data.

14. B1. Please describe concerns regarding the student's communication skills. *

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

15. B2. Has data been collected consistently throughout a 10 day period? *

Mark only one oval.

- If YES, please summarize data below.
- If NO, continue the student's current educational program and collect relevant data.

16. Summary of data around Communication needs

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

17. B3. Does the student have communication goals in the IEP? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- If NO, please hold an IEP team meeting to review/revise the IEP.

18. B4. Does the student receive services from the Speech Language Pathologist? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- If NO, please collaborate with the SLP regarding the concerns in #B1.

19. B5. Does the student have a functional, accessible method of communication at all times? *

(Prompted responses or providing answers to questions is not an adequate level of communicative ability to prevent behavior problems)

Mark only one oval.

- If YES, please describe the student's communication method, including technology currently used to support communication, learning, and classroom interaction (below).
- If NO, consult and collaborate with the SLP.

20. Description of student's communication method, including technology currently used to support communication, learning, and classroom interaction

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

21. B6. Does the student use the communication method(s) independently to communicate needs and wants? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

22. **B7. Summary of Communication/Instruction needs ***

Check all that apply.

- Unique strategies not typical for class
- Visual communication system
- Structured teaching
- High level of physical prompts
- High level of verbal prompts
- Assistive technology support
- Sign language
- N/A
- Other:

C. Social Skills

23. **Is there a concern about the student's social skills that interfere with educational achievement? ***

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No *Skip to question 34.*

C. Social Skills Concerns

This section is to be completed with input from the special education teacher and behavior specialist or psychologist and others with relevant knowledge and data.

24. **C1. Identify the specific social skills difficulties the student is currently experiencing. ***

(List the skills that the student doesn't have that are interfering with his functioning, e.g., handling teasing, accepting criticism, etc.) Include school settings.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

25. **C2. Does the student have opportunities to interact with typically developing peers? ***

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- If NO, describe the potential areas of interaction that would allow the student to have opportunities to engage with typically developing peers (below).

26. Describe the potential areas of interaction that would allow the student to have opportunities to engage with typically developing peers.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

27. Provide an overview of current opportunities to interact.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

28. C3. Does the student currently have social skills goals and objectives in his/her IEP that address the needs identified above? *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

If NO, convene an IEP meeting to discuss the student's need for social skills goals and objectives.

29. C4. Have the social skills goals/objectives been addressed consistently for at least six weeks? *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

30. C5. Has data been collected consistently throughout a six week period on the social skills goals/objectives? *

Mark only one oval.

If YES, summarize data below.

If NO, review/revise the social skills instruction, generalization plan and collect relevant data.

31. Social Skills data

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

32. Is the student showing progress in utilizing appropriate social skills noted above? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

33. C6. Summary of Social Skills needs *

Check all that apply.

- Student requires direct instruction in social skills
- Self-regulation
- Anger management
- Impulse control
- Social-pragmatic language
- N/A
- Other:

D. Behavioral

34. Does the student have severe behaviors that interfere with academic achievement? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No *Skip to question 47.*

D. Behavioral Concerns

This section to be complete with input from the special education teacher and BCBA, or psychologist and others with relevant knowledge and data.

35. D1. Does the student have a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- If NO, consult with BCBA regarding need for FBA

36. D2. Is the FBA updated and currently relevant? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- If NO, review/revise the FBA.

37. D3. List the concerning behavior(s) interfering with learning of self or others. *

(Include behavior, place, date and time, and frequency.)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

38. D4. Has quantifiable data been taken on all behaviors of concern for at least 10 school days? *

Mark only one oval.

- If YES, summarize data (below)
- No

39. List data collection methods and observations

What patterns or trends does the data show? Is the target behavior increasing, decreasing or staying the same?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

40. D5. Does the student have a Positive Behavior Support Plan (PBSP)? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- If NO, complete a PBSP for the student.

41. D6. Does the student have measurable behavior goals in the IEP? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- If NO, convene an IEP team meeting to review/revise the IEP.

42. D7. Have behavioral interventions stated in the PBSP been consistently implemented for at least 6 weeks? *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

43. D7. Has data been collected consistently throughout the 6-week period? *

Mark only one oval.

If YES, please summarize below.

If NO, review/revise PBSP and collect relevant data.

44. PBSP data summary

How effective is the plan in addressing the student's needs? Have modifications to the plan been considered?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

45. D8. Describe supports being utilized to implement behavior intervention plan. *

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

46. D9. Summary of Behavior needs *

Check all that apply.

Behavior plan implementation or documentation

Physically aggressive

Non-compliant in class

Non-complaint on campus

Runs away

Self-injurious

N/A

Other:

E. Inclusion

47. E1. Inclusion needs *

Check all that apply.

- Instructional support
- Physical support/positioning
- Safety supervision
- Social support
- Transitions
- Recess/lunch
- N/A
- Other:

F. Summary Information

48. F1. Describe supports currently provided.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

49. F2. List additional supports needed to implement IEP.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

50. F3. Summarize a fading plan designed to reduce the dependency and eliminate the need for individualized support in each area.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

51. F4. Please indicate potential staff that will be providing the individualized instructional support in needed areas.

(Identify by position: functional life skills, communication, social skills, behavior)

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

52. F5. Teacher(s) responsible for leading and directing the activities of the individual providing the support if the person providing the support is an ed tech.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

53. This form was completed by: *

.....

Send me a copy of my responses.

