

The Road to Inclusive Practices:
Third Report of the Mayor's Advisory
Council on Special Education

September 16, 2010

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Mayor Karl Dean
Office of the Mayor
Metro Courthouse
Nashville, TN

Dear Mayor Dean:

Thank you for this third opportunity to develop recommendations to improve educational opportunities for students receiving special education services in Metro Nashville Public Schools.

Over the past year, your advisory Council divided into three working groups and looked at supports, services and programs for students with disabilities. What follows are our recommendations for continued improvement.

Included in this year's report are new programs made possible because of the Mayor's Summit on Transition of Students from School to the Community held in spring 2009. New opportunities resulting directly from that Summit, which included representatives of MNPS, the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce and business community and community leaders, are highlighted in this report.

Our work would not have been possible without the wonderful commitment of our Council and without the excellent support of Danielle Mezera, director of the Mayor's Office of Children and Youth, and Debra McAdams, executive director of MNPS Exceptional Education.

As before, we could never have done this work without your support and your vision to improve the lives of students with disabilities and their families. Thank you for your interest and your deep commitment to improving the educational experiences of these students.

Sincerely,

Wendy Tucker

Elise McMillan

Linda DePriest

Mayor's Advisory Council Recommendations

1. **Using a dashboard checklist that has been developed exclusively for the Advisory Council, monitor and report on Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) progress around inclusionary practices and policies.** Much hard work and study from the previous work of the Council has resulted in a number of important areas that should be followed in future years to insure that progress is continuing. Appendix B.
2. **Conduct independent reviews of the progress MNPS has made towards inclusion goals and supporting instructional practices.** The Council recommends that teams of two to three members conduct a specified number of unannounced visits to classrooms throughout the course of the academic year. The teams would use protocols already developed by the District for monitoring instructional reviews.
3. **The leadership of MNPS, in consultation with the Mayor's Advisory Council, should develop and implement a District-wide strategic plan for students receiving special education services.** It is critical that the District develop and execute a vision for services and supports for students receiving special education services. The Council recommends jointly partnering with MNPS' Transformational Leadership Group on Students with Special Needs in order to achieve this.
4. **Continue development of employment training and other community-based opportunities for students receiving special education services who are transitioning from school to the community or workforce. These initiatives should be in collaboration with MNPS, the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, and area employers.** Following the Mayor's very successful Summit on Secondary Transition, several initiatives began this past year. A Pilot Project on Self-Determination and Secondary Transition was started at Stratford High School, and a new community-based classroom within Metro Nashville Government began in August 2010 modeled on the highly successful Project Opportunity at the Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt.

Mayor's Advisory Council Workgroup Reports

During 2009-2010, the Mayor's Advisory Council on Special Education addressed three areas:

- Assessment and Curriculum
- Communications
- School to Community

ASSESSMENT AND CURRICULUM REPORT

Continuing the ongoing monitoring, as recommended by the two previous Council reports, the Assessment and Curriculum workgroup reports the following:

1. **Status of Inclusive Practices** (recommended in Report I and Report II):

Recommendation: Inclusive practices should be adopted comprehensively across MNPS. This will require the conversion of the current delivery system to a model based on inclusive practices.

Progress Update: As of Fall 2010, all middle schools and all high schools offer a full continuum of services, with all students having the option of attending their school of zone. Six elementary schools will also offer a full continuum of services. The percentage of students with disabilities who are placed in the general education setting for 80% or more of their school day stands at 52.10% in 2010, an increase from 48.13% during 2009 and an increase from 38.5% during 2007.

Antioch High School staff attended an institute on High Performance Inclusive Secondary Schools in Boston, Massachusetts. Also, MNPS has involved the Department of Exceptional Education in its implementation of Small Learning Communities. More specific data were collected and attached to the initial report of this Council, showing statistics on inclusive practices at that time. Those same data points have been compiled for the most recent school year and are provided in Appendix C along with the initial data—for comparison. While MNPS is to be commended for making progress in this area, much work remains to be done before MNPS achieves district-wide inclusive practices. Therefore, continued independent monitoring of MNPS' progress in this area is recommended.

Though MNPS continues to move towards a more inclusive system, with children placed in the least restrictive educational environments in which they can progress, the District has advised the Council that it is following a 5-year plan, which this subcommittee has not seen. Because the realization of this key recommendation by the Council depends on the details and implementation of this 5-year plan, the Council strongly recommends that an independent review of the plan be conducted by the Council, and that the Council and District work in partnership to implement the plan.

2. MNPS Accountability for Students with Disabilities (recommended in Report I):

Recommendation: Support of students receiving special education services must become a concern of leadership of the district, not the responsibility of just those in the Special Education Department.

Progress Update: The Department of Exceptional Education is now represented on MNPS Executive staff, attends all Leadership and Learning meetings and is invited to present on special education at those meetings. Significant progress has been made in MNPS leadership taking ownership of its students with disabilities.

3. Professional Development and Training (recommended in Report I):

Recommendation: Professional development and training must be appropriate, sufficiently comprehensive, and accessible for all MNPS personnel for the successful conversion of MNPS to an inclusive practices model.

Progress Update: MNPS continues to offer training on inclusive practices and in teaching students with disabilities. A list of department offerings and attendance is attached as Appendix D.

MNPS leadership has advised the Mayor's Advisory Council that they are also making progress in training of para-professionals (educational assistants). According to MNPS leadership, a dedicated staff member serves as a trainer for educational assistants. Educational assistants are now invited to attend all district professional development and a plan is in place for teachers to act as substitutes for educational assistants when they attend professional development.

MNPS has further advised the Council of specific steps being taken to better train educational assistants and of its ongoing plan to develop professional development opportunities and to address specific training needs for educational assistants. As the training of educational assistants has been an area of concern expressed to the Council by many parents, the Council recommends that continued monitoring of this progress is warranted.

4. Access to Curriculum (recommended in Report I):

Recommendation: All students must have access to the general curriculum. According to the MNPS Department of Special Education and the information gathered by the Mayor's Advisory Council, access to the general curriculum is not available to some students with disabilities.

Progress Update: The subcommittee recognizes the difficulty in assessing the use of appropriate materials in a special education setting, particularly given that each child's education is IEP driven. However, the subcommittee also recognizes that access to appropriate educational materials and exposure to appropriate academic standards is critical for students with disabilities. A checklist has been developed and training is occurring on writing standards based IEPs. This

is an area that the subcommittee recommends be evaluated more specifically by the Mayor's Advisory Council.

5. Balanced Literacy (recommended in Report I):

Recommendation: Effective reading instruction must be available to all MNPS students. Accordingly, MNPS should continue to implement balanced literacy practices in elementary schools and to expand these practices to middle and high schools.

Progress Update: All elementary and middle schools implement a balanced literacy approach to learning. MNPS has trained a total of 3,501 elementary and middle school teachers in balanced/comprehensive literacy, with 612 trained during the 2009-2010 school year. Continued professional development will be provided in this critical area of teaching. MNPS leadership has advised the Mayor's Advisory Council that the District is also investing in research and evidence-based reading programs that offer a direct instructional approach to students who continue to struggle.

6. Data-Based Decision Making (recommended in Report I):

Recommendation: Data collection and data-based decision making should be implemented across MNPS. Although some schools and educators currently use data to inform practices, most will require professional development and training.

Progress Update: MNPS has assigned a data coach to each cluster, and itinerant staff are trained in evaluating data and in better utilization of data for better instructional practice.

7. Positive Behavior Supports (recommended in Report I and Report II)

Recommendation: District-wide strategies for positive behavior supports (PBS) should be formally adopted.

Progress Update: The implementation of PBS continues to grow in the District. Unfortunately, difficulty occurs when principals buy into the program and are then transferred. Twenty-two schools are currently implementing PBS at this time. Three more schools are scheduled to begin for the 2010-2011 school year. Implementation requires buy in from 85% of staff. With 140 schools in the district, MNPS has much work to do before PBS is adopted on a district-wide basis. It is recommended that the Council continue to assess progress in this area.

8. Transportation (recommended in Report I and Report II):

Recommendation: Transportation to and from school should convert to an inclusive model, mirroring the efforts made in the classroom. Furthermore, MNPS must develop and implement effective communication policies, safety procedures, and training for staff to ensure the safe transport of students with disabilities.

Progress Update: While specific progress has been made in moving students to their neighborhood schools, thus reducing bus routes by 12 from 2008-2009 to 2009-2010, and while it is anticipated that the number of routes will continue to decline as students with disabilities are integrated into their zoned schools, conversion of the transportation system to better mirror the inclusive model in the classroom has not yet occurred. This does appear, however, to be an area of continued interest for MNPS. Therefore, it is recommended that the Council continue to monitor progress in this area.

On safety, communication and training, every special education bus now has a monitor and video equipment. All bus drivers of general education buses can also request monitors. All drivers and monitors participate in training. Every bus has a roster, and a position has been designated to oversee transportation for students with disabilities.

MNPS leadership has provided the Council with the following information on improvements in transportation subsequent to a federal court decree:

The Consent Decree specifically states that “Every bus driver who operates a special education bus or a mainstream bus that transports at least one student with a disability may initiate a request to the Department of Special Education for a bus monitor, which will be considered by the Department as a request for an optional related service for a student with a disability. If the Department of Special Education determines that a bus monitor is necessary as an optional related service, the student shall be assigned **to a bus with a bus monitor.**” We are required by the decree to have substitute monitors available when regular assigned monitors are absent. Last year we had 3 monitors who rode on general education buses due to behavior issues, which was a request from the schools.

Safety Procedures

All of our drivers and monitors will receive at in-service, the following information:

- Newly created Ride Guide.
- Information on reporting sexual and physical assaults on school buses.
- Information from the Decree that we are mandated to provide verbally and in writing: Confidentiality of bus rosters, requesting monitors, requesting camera downloads.
- Proper procedure for reporting above listed information.
- Seating charts for each individual run.
- Evacuation plans.

Training

- All drivers and monitors are required annually to receive extensive professional development training on the unique challenges, considerations, concerns, and skills required to transport students with disabilities on MNPS-operated buses.
- The laws that govern the transportation of students with disabilities, including: Title IX; IDEA; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C., and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Nonviolent Crisis Intervention

It is recommended that the Council continue to monitor progress in this very critical area.

9. Gifted Services (recommended in Report II):

Recommendation: MNPS must improve the identification of gifted students and the delivery of gifted services for these students.

Progress Update: MNPS developed a district team to address gifted services. District wide assessments for Encore were conducted, and assessments for intellectually gifted students increased. The percentage of minority students accessing gifted services has increased by 11%. Programs continue to expand, and each school will have access to an Encore teacher for 2010-2011.

10. Aftercare and Summer Programs (recommended in Report II):

Recommendation: MNPS should expand aftercare and summer opportunities for students with disabilities.

Progress Update: Aftercare and summer programs for children with disabilities continue to be areas of need. MNPS has made an effort to offer Extended School Year services to all qualifying students and has been in contact with Candy Markman, who oversees the Nashville Afterschool Zone Alliance, to discuss ways to provide access to its afterschool programming for students with disabilities. Unfortunately, financial realities make real progress on these fronts very challenging.

11. Disproportionality Monitoring (recommended in Report II):

Recommendation: Disproportionate demographic representation of racial and ethnic minorities receiving special education services requires continued monitoring by leadership of the district.

Progress Update: Hispanic students continue to be underrepresented in the areas of emotional disturbance and other health impairments. The state requires continued monitoring of disproportionality but has at this point determined that the District disproportionate representation is not the result of inappropriate identification.

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

The Communication workgroup focused on the following areas:

- Development of a parent survey to send to homes of MNPS students
- Drafting of an internal MNPS survey
- Review of the Exceptional Education Web page located on the MNPS Website

In addition, the group gathered information from Debra McAdams, Executive Director of Exceptional Education, related to initiatives/improvements that have been undertaken this past year to improve both internal and external communication. That information included:

- Interview with Ms. McAdams (conducted June 30, 2010)
- TN Parent Survey (completed in 2008-09 and shared with MNPS in Fall, 2009)
- MNPS Action Plan (completed Fall, 2009, in response to the TN Parent Survey)
- Child Find procedures and data gathered

Status

The status of each bulleted point is included below:

The Parent Survey, developed by the Advisory Council, required approval from the Research and Evaluation Department prior to dissemination. Ms. McAdams worked with that department and the Council to finalize the document and gain approval. Staff from the Exceptional Education Department prepared the survey for dissemination the week of May 3, 2010. Unfortunately, the flooding that occurred in Nashville on May 1 and 2, and the subsequent closing of school for a week, resulted in the survey being postponed. A copy of the proposed survey can be found in Appendix E.

An internal survey, Professional Communication Survey, was also drafted by the Council. However, an internal survey was already planned by the District. The format of this internal survey has not been made available to Ms. McAdams; however, she has agreed to share any information that is pertinent when/if it becomes available to her. It is her understanding that the survey was completed at the end of the year with a random sampling of employees covering a variety of topics related to the District. The internal survey drafted by the Council has been shared with her for future use.

An extensive review of the Exceptional Education Web page took place and generated a list of suggestions for the Department of Exceptional Education to consider. The Communications workgroup has asked for input from the entire Council. These suggestions/recommendations will be given to the Exceptional Education Department for its consideration once they are compiled. It is commendable that when inaccuracies in the Web page were shared with Ms. McAdams on June 30, 2010, they were corrected no later than July 2.

An interview was conducted with Ms. McAdams on June 30, 2010 to gather information about improvements/initiatives related to both internal and external communications, which were undertaken this past year. The interview included questions about future plans with regard to

communication initiatives. Ms. McAdams generated an extensive list of activities that the Department of Exceptional Education has undertaken in the past twelve months. Please refer to Appendix F.

Ms. McAdams also made available a copy of the TN 2008-2009 Parent Survey and its results. This survey, which included 25 survey questions sent to 1,906 MNPS parents, was disseminated by the State Department and shared with the MNPS Department of Exceptional Education in the fall of 2009. Of this number, only 213 (11.2%) responded, which skews the validity of the results. How this survey was disseminated and who it went to is important to find out prior to initiating another parent survey. Survey results are included in Appendix G.

An Action Plan was required by the State Department in response to the TN 2008-2009 Parent Survey. MNPS was asked to select the three lowest scored questions based on the response rate and plan improvement activities for those areas. A plan was written for these and completed in November 2009. It addressed the following survey items:

- The school offers parent training about special education issues (*47.6% agreement*)
- The school offers information on agencies that help children transition from school (*51.2% agreement*)
- The school offers students without disabilities opportunity to learn about disabilities (*51.8% agreement*)

The submitted Action Plan is included in Appendix H.

Data and procedures related to *Child Find* were gathered from the Exceptional Education Department after questions were raised about the process and its effectiveness. Colleen Thomas, Coordinator for the Exceptional Education Department, outlined the process for the Communications workgroup. MNPS disseminates information to Head Start programs, day care centers, and community service providers about how to access services for children who are suspected of having a disability. In addition, this information is posted on the MNPS website both on the Exceptional Education pages as well as the Pre-K General Education pages. MNPS Customer Service is also educated about how to direct parents or agencies who inquire about accessing special education services.

To begin the process, parents must request a referral packet from the Exceptional Education Department. Parents are expected to complete and return the packet. However, if the parent does not return the forms, then a letter and/or a phone call are made to the parent in an effort to follow up.

Data from the Department shows the following:

- MNPS was 99+% compliant in meeting the State Department's third birthday measure
- Referrals for psychological evaluation from August, 2008-July 31, 2009 numbered 346
- Referrals for psychological evaluation from August, 2009-July 23, 2010 numbered 415
- Pre-K referrals leading to eligibility (psychological and/or speech/language) from August, 2008-July 31, 2009, was 166
- Pre-K referrals leading to eligibility (psychological and/or speech/language) from August, 2009-July 23, 2010, was 345

The increase this past year in the number of pre-K referrals suggests that there are no communication problems in the *Child Find* process.

Summary

There are many challenges to effective internal and external communication in MNPS. This past year, the Exceptional Education Department has undertaken new initiatives and made improvements with ongoing processes in an effort to address these challenges. Increased professional development opportunities for teachers and paraprofessionals, improved information on the MNPS website, and scheduled collaboration with the Leadership and Learning Department are examples of the ongoing commitment to improve the internal communication within the District. Likewise, opportunities for parents and community members to have input in department initiatives have increased as well as outreach to the community for the purpose of educating parents and community members about exceptional education services.

Although internal and external survey data are not available, there are data-based indicators that suggest that communication is improving. The increased number of pre-K referrals and eligibilities, the decrease in suspensions greater than ten days for students with disabilities, and the increase in percentage of students with disabilities in the general education environment for 80% of the day are examples cited in the Transformational Leadership Group (TLG) presentation in June, 2010. Though the data are not directly related to communication, effective communication has to occur for these improvements to be made.

However, despite the improvements, concerns continue to exist about internal and external communications. As the District grows in diversity and the Exceptional Education Department grows, the challenges for both effective internal and external communication grow as well. Consistency, clarity, timeliness, and comprehensibility are concerns that arise in conversations with stakeholders both within MNPS and within the community.

Recommendations

- Continue to examine and evaluate information on the MNPS website for accuracy, content, clarity, and “parent friendliness.”
- Assign a staff member from Exceptional Education to work with the MNPS webmaster to provide updates and edit inaccuracies in a timely manner.
- Explore other methods of communication for those parents who do not have Internet access and for parents of diverse language backgrounds. Suggestions include: parent meetings, newsletters, and translated materials.
- Gather information and feedback from parents via ongoing surveys. Explore ways to gather survey information that guarantees participation from parents representative of the demographics and of all instructional tier levels.
- Continue to work on the areas of need identified in the TN Parent Survey—parent training, transition, and education of all students about students with disabilities.

- Evaluate information from the MNPS internal survey to determine the need for an internal survey and the issues it should address.
- Continue to develop and strengthen the Exceptional Education Family Advisory Council as a means to foster a parent voice and mutual understanding with the MNPS Department of Exceptional Education.
- Continue to collaborate with Leadership and Learning to provide information to principals and schools regarding integrated services, instructional strategies, and compliance.
- Provide training for all MNPS staff on the new support team procedures.
- Consider including students on committees and surveys to gain input and information about how to better meet their needs.

SCHOOL TO COMMUNITY REPORT

The School to Community workgroup concentrated its work in two areas this past year:

- Development of a Community-Based Classroom within Metro Government
- Creation of a Secondary Transition Model Program at Stratford High School

Development of a Community-Based Classroom within Metro Government

In 2009, Mayor Karl Dean and the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Special Education hosted a Summit on Transition that included representatives from Metro Public Schools, community agencies, the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, employers, and the Mayor's office to discuss the needs of young adults with disabilities who are graduating high school. One program highlighted during the Summit was Project Opportunity, a job training and placement program housed at Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt. Discussed during the Summit was the idea of creating a similar program within a Metro Government office to provide job training and placement for Metro high school students.

In the fall of 2009, The Arc of Davidson County approached Project Opportunity and MNPS about a grant opportunity from The Arc US and the Walmart Corporation to fund such a pilot. The grant application was successful, creating the possibility to make the idea that began with the Summit a reality.

Mayor Dean hosted a meeting with several departments within Metro Government to determine which department could become a training site for students receiving special education services from MNPS. These students are currently in community-based classrooms in other sites in the community. After presenting the Project Opportunity model, three departments stepped forward to offer participation and internship sites and several others expressed future interest. Brian Mast, head of Secondary Transition for MNPS and a member of the Mayor's Advisory Council, and Sara Ezell, Project Opportunity Program Director and a member of the Mayor's Advisory Council, met with staff from the Police Department and from the County Clerk's office about possible job sites within their departments. A meeting with the General Services Department is planned. A classroom space has been identified and staff, including a teacher and two paraprofessionals, has been assigned.

One of the keys to the success of a program like Project Opportunity is advanced planning and preparation of training materials and job sites. This includes providing sensitivity training to the departments to address any concerns about working with people with disabilities, paving the way to a smooth entry for the student interns. In addition, the teachers and staff will receive training in the development of job tasks to prepare developmentally appropriate training materials to facilitate training the student interns on the worksite. And finally, a curriculum will be developed to provide the student interns with important information about the *culture* of the workplace and any site-specific information they should know, including dress codes, break times, and workplace specific lingo they may hear. All of these planning activities are currently being addressed and completed in partnership among MNPS, Project Opportunity, the receiving

governmental departments, the Mayor's Advisory Council on Special Education, and the Arc of Davidson County. The goal is for students ages 18 to 22 participating in MNPS secondary transition programs to be prepared to find meaningful employment and participation in the community as they move from school to the community.

Creation of a Secondary Transition Model Program at Stratford High School

A secondary transition teacher position was added at Stratford High School for the 2009-2010 school year to lead the development of the school's model secondary transition program. Members of the Council representing the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services collaborated with Stratford to support students moving from the school to the community.

Through this program, listed are the numbers of students served in several categories of concentration during the last school year.

- 1) Employment – Four students have job placements (Citi Trends, Pizza Hut, and Goodwill Summer Program)
- 2) Employment Referrals – Twenty-nine students were referred to the Goodwill Summer Work Program.
- 3) Apprenticeship Program Referrals – Four students were referred to the Y Build program.
- 4) Tennessee Career Center – Although all students did the initial online registration, four students completed the entire process by taking necessary documents to the Center and meeting with a counselor.
- 5) Vocational Rehabilitation Referrals – Thirty-four students met with Vocational Rehabilitation Services counselors to begin the initial eligibility process. Of that number, eight participated in further assessment, six of whom were determined eligible, with two of the six undergoing continued evaluations.

Additional students pursued postsecondary education opportunities. Although four students submitted applications to postsecondary educational institutions, only one student completed the process and was awarded acceptance. Another student was accepted to TSU and was also a new hire for Burger King. Another student is employed at Hampton Inn and completed admission process to receive acceptance to Volunteer State Community College.

The Stratford project is continuing in the 2010-2011 academic year.

Appendix A. Members of the Mayor’s Advisory Council on Special Education

Deidra Adamczyk
Department of Exceptional Education, MNPS

Miatta Alexander
Assistant Principal, MNPS

Etta Bell
Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce

Debbie L. Brown
Department of Exceptional Education, MNPS

Andrea Cooper
Assistant Commissioner, Division of Rehabilitation Services
Tennessee Department of Human Services

Linda DePriest
Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Support, MNPS

Sara Ezell
Program Director, Project Opportunity
Vanderbilt University Medical Center

Kim Finch
Principal
Stratford High School, MNPS

Gregory C. Hutchings
Principal
West End Middle School, MNPS

Debra McAdams
Executive Director
Department of Exceptional Education , MNPS

Elise McMillan
Co-Director
Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Excellence in Development Disabilities

Arie L. Nettles
Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt

Amanda Peltz
Executive Director, Autism Society of Middle Tennessee

Erin Richardson
Attorney

Holly Ruskin
Attorney

John Staubitz
Teacher, MNPS

Wendy Tucker
Attorney

Mary Jane Ware
Program Coordinator of Transition Services
Division of Rehabilitation Services, Tennessee Department of Human Services

Marsha Wilson
Educator and Community Outreach
Nashville Prevention Partnership

Mayor's Office
Danielle Mezera
Mayor's Office

Appendix B. Dashboard Checklist

Using a dashboard checklist that has been developed exclusively for the Mayor's Advisory Council, the following areas will be monitored to follow MNPS progress around inclusionary practices and policies. Much hard work and study from the previous work of the Council has resulted in a number of important areas that should be followed in future years to insure that progress is continuing. The checklist will be finalized as our group begins its fourth year of work.

Access to general education classes and curriculum for all students

Access to aftercare and summer programs

Child Find results

Data based decision making

Expansion of community-based classrooms with Metro Government

MNPS Family Advisory Council

Parent survey results

Parent trainings

Percentage of students receiving special education services in general education classrooms

Positive Behavior Support Plans at schools

Results at Stratford Secondary Transition Pilot Program

Trainings for educational assistants

Transportation programming

Website updates

Appendix C. Location of Service by Disability

Loaction of Service by Disability 2009-2010							
Disability Name	In the Regular Class at least 80% of the time	In the Regular Class 40% to 79% of the time	In the Regular Class less than 40% of the time	Separate School	Count of Homebound / Hospital	Correctional Facilities	Total
AUTISM	184	76	171	20	2		453
DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY	187	71	68	3			329
EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE	212	122	128	60		11	533
HEARING IMPAIRMENTS	71	14	13				98
Intellectual Disability	63	104	454	21	4		646
MULTIPLE DISABILITIES	3	3	16	1	2		25
ORTHOPEdic IMPAIRMENTS	25	7	14	1			47
OTHER HEALTH IMPAIRMENTS	509	220	102	27	5	5	868
SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES	1212	631	106	22	1	10	1982
LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENTS	1130	254	40	4	1	1	1430
TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY	7	1	5				13
VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS	34	6	2	3			45
Grand Total	3637	1509	1119	162	15	27	6469
Percent	56.22%	23.33%	17.30%	2.50%	0.23%	0.42%	100.00%

Appendix D. ERO Sessions

ERO Sessions
July 1, 2009 - August 6, 2010

Course	Exceptional Ed Teachers	General Ed Teachers	EA's	Other	Total in Attendance Per P D	
"Speakers Day" Annette Breaux, Larry Bell	112	8		2	19	141
AAC Implementation	33			4		37
Adapting Special Area Classes for Students with Autism	17	6		3		26
Aligning IEP's with Early Learning Standards	23					23
Compliance Facilitators and Instructional Facilitators TCAP MAAS Training	29				2	31
CPI Refresher (Nonviolent Physical Crisis Intervention) I Day Course	52	12		50	19	133
Differentiated Instruction	227	641		196	33	1097
EASY IEP	204	37		1	40	282
Effective Coaching Strategies	22					22
Elementary Math: Strategies with Vanderbilt	17	14				31
Gateway Intervention	2	7				9
IDEIA, IEPs, and PWN: The Framework for Meaningful and Purposeful IEP Meetings	26	12			3	41
Improving Social Skills for Children with Autism	18	10		17		45
Inclusion Implementation Workshop	3	18			2	23
Inclusion Strategies Autism	43	51		16	4	114
Inclusive Service Delivery for Administrators	34	60			2	96
Inclusive Services Part I	945	577		46	319	1887
Inclusive Services Part II	309	707		20	206	1242
Inclusive Services Part III	3	15		1	1	20
Increasing Functional Communication Skills	15	2		2		19
Increasing Independence for Students with Low Incidence Disabilities	19	17		9	1	46

ERO Sessions
July 1, 2009 - August 6, 2010

Course	Exceptional Ed Teachers	General Ed Teachers	EA's	Other	Total in Attendance Per P D
Integrating Problem Solving in 5th - 8th Grade Classrooms	8	16			24
Managing Challenging Behaviors	32	18	11	10	71
Math Strategies for Reaching all Students: A collaboration with Peabody College @ Vandy	8	5			13
Mental Health and Schools	33	33	8	26	100
Nonviolent Physical Crisis Intervention(CPI) 2 Day Course	90	94	107	50	341
Portfolio Development	60			1	61
Principles of Transition	171	9	24		204
Professional Development Training for Paraprofessional in Exceptional Education	38	25	333	16	412
Promoting Independence and Positive Behavior in the Learning Environment	2	2		1	5
Related Arts Inclusion Strategies for Students with Autism	3	13	3	2	21
Review/Updates of the State Standards in area of Autism for School Psychologists	1			40	41
SAMA - Satori Alternative to Managing Aggression	1	1	3		5
School Wide Positive Behavior (SWPBS) - Primary Prevention Intervention Training	61	66	7	69	203
Social Skills Curriculum Training & Classroom Management	23	3			26
Special Education Teacher Institute	113	7	29		149
Structuring the Classroom to Promote Learning	14	30	12	3	59
TCAP-ALT Training	175	2	2	6	185

ERO Sessions
July 1, 2009 - August 6, 2010

Course	Exceptional Ed Teachers	General Ed Teachers	EA's	Other	Total in Attendance Per P D
Training in Ethics and Professional Practices for Schools Psychologists				44	44
Transforming Instruction: Integrating Graphing Calculators in Algebra I & II	9	17			26
Transforming: Targeted Elementary Math Instruction with Manipulatives	21	138			159
Using Discrete Trials in Low incidence Classrooms	30	3	22		55
Using Sensory Processing Strategies in The Classroom	56	39	24	10	129
Writing Effective Functional Behavior Strategies and Behavior Intervention Plans: Part I	110	118	6	27	261
Inclusive Services IV: team Building and Collaboration	16	11	2	1	30
Totals	3228	2844	960	957	7989

Appendix E. Proposed Parent Survey

April 22, 2010

Communication Survey

Dear Families:

Thank you for reading this survey. The purpose of this survey is to gather information and improve communication between the Metro Nashville Public School's (MNPS) Department of Exceptional Education and Family member(s) of students with disabilities. Please complete a survey for each of your children receiving Exceptional Education Services (Special Education). This information has been requested by Mayor Karl Dean and will be shared with him in July 2010. If you prefer, you may also respond to this survey by logging on to www.mnps.org.

1. Please share the year that your child became eligible (i.e. began receiving special education services)? _____
 - a. Pre-K _____ (name of your child's school)
 - b. Elementary _____ (name of your child's school)
 - c. Middle School _____ (name of your child's school)
 - d. High and up to age 22 _____ (name of your child's school)

2. Please write the zip code where you live _____

3. Have you logged on to the MNPS Department of Exceptional Education website? (<http://www.mnps.org/Page57037.aspx>) Yes/No (please circle)
 - a. If **Yes**---Were you able to get the information you needed? Yes/No (please circle)
 - b. If **No**---, what other information did you need?

4. How would you like to get information from the Department of Exception Education? (Information such as procedures, legal updates, upcoming events/workshops, etc) :
 - a. Call outs (automated call from MNPS)
 - b. School personnel
 - c. Website
 - d. Email

- e. Personal Contact
- f. Newsletter
- g. Other

5. How often would you like to receive information and/or updates from the Department of Exception Education? _____

6. What kind of information and/or updates would be helpful to you?

7. Who would you go to for assistance if you had a concern about your child's education, or you needed to get information about an issue related to his/her education? (Circle all that apply)

- a. Friend/neighbor
- b. School personnel
- c. Advocate/Advocate Groups
- d. Community Center
- e. Church
- f. Metro Nashville Public School Customer Service
- g. Other _____

8. Did your child get the help he/she needed when problems with learning and/or behavior were identified through the school-based S-Team or Student Support meetings? Yes or no (Please circle) Please explain:

9. As a parent of a student with a disability, what kind of training would you find helpful?

10. Are you aware of the Exceptional Education Family Advisory Council (EEFAC) for families? Yes or No (Please circle)

The Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools Department of Exceptional Education (formerly the Department of

Special Education) is recruiting members for a new family advisory council. The Exceptional Education

Family Advisory Council, EEFAC, will be family members and community partners, whom will advise and

assist on issues related to students receiving Exceptional Education Services within MNPS.

11. Please list any other concerns, comments, or recommendations you may have related to communication from MNPS Department of Exceptional Education.

Please return your completed survey to your child's Exceptional Education (Special Education) Teacher by April 30, 2010.

Appendix F. Interview with MNPS Exceptional Services Director Debra McAdams

June 30, 2010

Summarize improvements/new initiatives within the Exceptional Education Department related to internal communication:

- Expanded information on the website
- Expanded professional development opportunities and increased participation from MNPS certificated and classified staff
- Sent newsletter to MNPS employees three times this year with information and updates about the department and the law
- Increased number of instructional facilitators assigned to schools
- Participated in the Leadership and Learning staff meetings
- Conducted Professional Learning Communities in Fall, 2009, for compliance and instructional facilitators as well as lead teachers from the Exceptional Education Department
- Held “Speaker’s Day” in February, 2010
- Posted information and videos on MNPS Tube
- Posted information and forms on the Intranet and Easy IEP
- Participated in meetings with building principals to build master schedules that promote the integrated service delivery model
- Conducted mid-year conferences with each building principal to discuss progress toward Year 1 Targets
- Scheduled two week long Teacher Institutes in Summer, 2010, to address topics related to compliance and instruction as related to Exceptional Education
- Scheduled district-wide in-service for all exceptional education teachers on August 10, 2010
- Participated in instructional rounds in schools at all tier levels with the Leadership and Learning Department
- Collaborated with new teachers to MNPS

Summarize improvements/new initiatives within the Exceptional Education Department related to external communication:

- Expanded information on the website
- Concentrated effort to respond to parent concerns/questions within 24 hours
- Included parent and community representation in the Transformational Leadership Group
- Included parent and community representation on the Gifted Task Force
- Included parent representation on the Integrated Service Delivery Task Force
- Included parent and community representation on the team writing the new district policy for s-teams

- Initiated forming a group, Building Collaboration with Community Agencies to Support Students with Autism, that involved the Exceptional Education Department and local agencies
- Provided professional development for Teaching Fellows
- Held a “Parent Training Day” in November, 2009
- Participated in Parent University
- Formed a liaison with the Rochelle Center to address student transition
- Joined the Business Leadership Network of Nashville to collaborate in coming years about work opportunities for MNPS students
- Formed a partnership with SunTrust Bank to provide transition classes for students at Stratford
- Participated in the YMCA STABILITY program to collaborate about ways to transition students from high school to work
- Held a College Night/Transition Fair in collaboration with the Counseling Department
- Presented information and collaborated with others at several transition conferences in Tennessee
- Provided professional development to both general and special education teachers at local universities
- Shared information at PTO/PTA meetings at numerous schools regarding the Integrated Service Delivery Model
- Participated with other agencies in the Behavioral Health Committee
- Posted information and videos on MNPS Tube information
- Provided multiple ways to register for participation in training events—phone, e-mail, etc.

Identify future improvements/initiatives that are planned to address internal communication:

- Assign a staff member to oversee the website for inaccuracies and needed updates
- Work with CSS as they audit the Exceptional Education Department, looking at efficiency and alignment of the department
- Conduct principal in-service on legal issues related to special education
- Provide Exceptional Education Handbook for exceptional education teachers at August district wide in-service
- Provide administrative training on Easy IEP for information and compliance

Identify future improvements/initiatives that are planned to address external communication:

- Assign a staff member to oversee the website for inaccuracies and needed updates
- Implement a new Parent Family Liaison position in July, 2010
- Implement contract with Project Opportunity and ARC to develop a community based transition program in August

- Conduct a Town Hall Meeting
- Send a Parent newsletter
- Improve effectiveness and participation in EEFAC

Since the parent survey had to be put on hold due to the flood, are there any plans to go ahead with it in the future?

Yes, however, I am concerned that with a paper and pencil survey we will not reach parents from all demographics and at all tier levels. I would like to do a random sampling of parents representing all demographic and tier levels and do a phone survey. It would require lots of manpower but I think the information we receive would be more representative of our parents as a whole.

What is the status of the internal survey being conducted by MNPS?

That survey has been done with a random sampling of employees. I do not know the status of the report or if any of it will be beneficial to the Exceptional Education Department.

Our sub-committee has drafted an internal survey and would be glad to share it with you should you want it in the future.

I would be happy to consider it after I see what information is gained from the MNPS internal survey and the CSS audit.

What can MAC do to support improved communication?

I appreciate the offer of support. If we did a phone survey, we would love some additional manpower.

Constructive input and criticism accompanied with suggestions for improvement are always welcomed.

Appendix G. Tennessee 2008-2009 Parent Survey

McAdams, Debra B (MNPS)

From: Sandra Albright [Sandra.Albright@tn.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, October 13, 2009 12:53 PM
To: McAdams, Debra B (MNPS)
Subject: Parent Survey Results
Attachments: Metro Nashville District breakdown.doc; Ind #8 Memo on Survey Results.doc; Ind # 8 Parental Inv Impr Activity Grid 0809.doc

Supervisors,

Please find attachments for the results of the Parent Survey and the Corrective Action Plan you need to email me by November 20th, 2009. Please read the memo for further instructions. If you have any questions please give me a call @ 615-532-7843. Thanks, Sandra

Sandra E. Albright
Tennessee Department of Education
Management Consultant
North Central Region
1256 Foster Ave.
Nashville, TN 37210
(615) 532-7843

TN 2008-09 Parent Survey
Results for Metro Nashville SD

Question	Metro Nashville District			Statewide Totals			State Target
	# Responses	% Agree	Mean Score	# Responses	% Agree	Mean Score	
Total # disseminated to Metro Nashville Parents 1906							
Total # completed from Metro Nashville Parents 213							
Response 11.2%							
1. System facilitates parent involvement to improve services	211	81.5%	4.52	3847	89.4%	4.83	95%
2. Discussed at IEP how child would participate in statewide assessment	209	68.4%	4.22	3837	82.9%	4.63	
3. Discussed at IEP needed accommodations & modifications	211	89.1%	4.90	3862	94.7%	5.10	
4. My child's evaluation report is written in terms I understand	212	87.3%	4.87	3863	91.5%	4.99	
5. Teachers & Admin ensure that I have fully understood Proc Safeguards	213	86.4%	4.81	3886	92.3%	5.05	
6. School communicates regularly about child's progress on IEP goals	211	76.8%	4.47	3877	85.2%	4.79	
7. The school offers parents training about special education issues	206	47.6%	3.55	3767	61.1%	3.89	
8. School provides info on agencies that help child in transition from school	203	51.2%	3.62	3750	65.4%	4.03	
9. School explains parents' options if they disagree w/school's decisions	209	75.1%	4.33	3844	79.4%	4.47	
10. My child's IEP tells how progress towards goals will be measured	206	85.0%	4.72	3846	91.5%	4.92	
11. Child taught in reg classes w/supports to maximum extent appropriate	203	75.4%	4.46	3803	86.6%	4.82	
12. Sp Ed teachers make accommodations & modifications are on IEP	210	86.7%	4.78	3838	92.1%	4.97	
13. Gen Ed teachers make accommodations & modifications are on IEP	207	74.9%	4.45	3813	88.3%	4.82	
14. Gen Ed & Sp Ed teachers work together to assure IEP is implemented	202	75.7%	4.50	3815	87.5%	4.82	
15. Principal does everything possible to support appropriate SE services	203	79.8%	4.54	3798	86.4%	4.76	
16. The school provides my child with all the services on my child's IEP	206	83.0%	4.64	3838	90.3%	4.90	
17. School offers students w/o disabilities opportunity to learn about disab.	195	51.8%	3.69	3675	66.1%	4.05	
18. School ensures after-school & extracurricular act are accessible	199	64.3%	4.01	3687	77.7%	4.38	
19. Over past yr. SE services have helped me to understand SE system	212	69.8%	4.19	3827	78.5%	4.44	
20. Over past yr. SE services have helped me understand child's needs	211	70.6%	4.22	3814	80.8%	4.56	
21. I ask my child to talk about what he or she is learning in school	211	98.1%	5.41	3843	98.2%	5.41	
22. I communicate to my child that it is important to do well in school	208	98.6%	5.52	3850	98.7%	5.56	
23. I meet with child's teacher(s) to plan my child's program services	204	88.7%	4.96	3830	92.2%	5.04	
24. I participate in school sponsored activities	205	76.6%	4.43	3766	80.6%	4.52	
25. I participate in the school's PTA or PTO	195	52.3%	3.75	3640	52.8%	3.73	

DATE: September 16, 2009

TO: Special Education Supervisors

FROM: Joseph Fisher

RE: Parent Survey Results

During the 08-09 school year a parent survey was conducted in your school district to determine how well parents felt the district facilitated their involvement in their children's educational programs. The results of that survey are attached.

The table of results includes numbers of surveys disseminated and completed as well as the response rate for each of the 25 survey questions. Your overall outcome as compared to the State's target for improvement is found on line 1. In reviewing these results please note that very small numbers of respondents and/or low response rates may skew validity of results. In response to your receipt of these results, please select the three (3) lowest questions based on response rate and plan improvement activities for those areas.

A template is attached for use in documenting your improvement activities. Once these have been written please email a copy to Sandra Albright at sandra.albright@state.tn.us. A follow up report will be requested in approximately one year to determine how efforts for improvement have proceeded.

Thank you for your assistance and involvement in these efforts to better utilize parents in your school district's educational programs. Please feel free to contact us should you have further questions.

Appendix H. MNPS Action Plan

Parental Involvement Improvement Activities	Timeline	Resources
#7 The school offers parent training about special education issues.		
District has developed an Exceptional Education Family Advisory Committee (EEFAC) to address parent concerns and offer trainings throughout the district.	Committee members will be established by January 1, 2010 and meetings will occur monthly	Exceptional Education Leadership Team and Chair persons of EEFAC
Stimulus funding being used to contract with ARC for a position called Family Liaison. This position will facilitate ongoing communication with families and school district and provide training about special education issues.	Will start January 1, 2010 depending on contract negotiations. 1-2 year contract	Stimulus funds Exceptional Education Leadership Team
Parent Training Day – included break out sessions on: Gifted Transition Autism Integrated Service Delivery Mental Health Collaboration Early Childhood Assessment and Evaluation Centerstone Mental Health co-op Kennedy Center	Annually	Discretionary Grant
Recommended to all schools in Year 1 targets to hold a parent meeting at the school level to discuss integrated service delivery model and special education issues.	Ongoing for the 2009-2010 school year	Exceptional Education staff is attending these school level parent meetings
A newly upgraded website has been developed for the Exceptional Education provides parents with easier to access information about special education.	Ongoing	Web site team

#8 School Provides info on agencies that help child in transition from school

Parental Involvement Improvement Activities	Timeline	Resources
"The Family Handbook, A roadmap to state services for adults and children who have mental retardation." – will be distributed to all schools and placed in central locations	During the course of the 2009-2010 school year	Transition Team
A copy of the "Parents Guide to Transition" will be given to parents during Transition/ IEP meetings and discussion will occur regarding transition.	During the course of the 2009-2010 school year	Exceptional Education Teachers Transition Team Professional Development for all teachers on transition.
Outside agencies provide pamphlets that are accessible in schools for students who are transitioning.	During the course of the 2009-2010 school year	Exceptional Education Teachers Transition Team
The Department of Exceptional Education along with the School Counseling Department hosted a College Night/Transition Fair	October 13 and will continue to do this annually	We had 7 agencies present at the fair
Develop an informational sheet to be distributed to all families during Transition/IEP meetings that include a comprehensive list of agencies and funding sources that may assist families in the transition process. Provide this information on MNPS website also.	During the course of the 2009-2010 school year	Transition Team and Transition Coordinator Mayors Advisory Council – subgroup on Transition

#17 School offers students without disabilities opportunity to learn about disabilities

Parental Involvement Improvement Activities	Timeline	Resources
This is occurring in pockets at some schools. In August a presentation was conducted with the 2 nd grade students at Lockland Elementary specifically about students with Autism	Ongoing	General Education and Exceptional Education Teachers Principals School Counselors
To be included in our 5 year plan on Integrated Service Delivery. Each school will be responsible to teaching students about disabilities.	2010-2011 school year	School Counselors Teachers Mental Health Workers
Students without disabilities participate in peer tutoring, peer buddies and "lunch bunch" with students with disabilities. This creates a natural environment to learn about one another.	Ongoing	General Education and Exceptional Education Teachers Principals School Counselors
Create signage to post in schools for Disability Awareness Month and provide information about ways to acknowledge Disability Awareness Month.	October 2010	Exceptional Education Department