

School Board's Role in Special Education

Vermont School Boards Association

Special Education Primer

- ✍ 14, 358 students w/ disabilities
- ✍ SPED law passed in 1975
- ✍ Required “Free Appropriate Public Ed.”
- ✍ Amended now to “IDEA”
- ✍ Includes all students in assessments

Special Education Primer

- ✍ Eval/Planning Team determines eligibility
- ✍ SPED student needs IEP
- ✍ Disagreeing parents may request mediation
- ✍ Must learn in “Least Restrictive Environment”

Special Education Funding

✍ State pays SPED 60% of allowable costs

✍ Act 117 (40%)

- Statewide programs
- Block grant
- Extraordinary reimbursement
- Intensive reimbursement

Special Education Funding

- ✍ Early Essential Education (EEE)
- ✍ State-Placed Students
- ✍ Federal Funds

Special Education Formula	FY03	FY04
Total Estimated Formula Costs	\$163	\$175
State Share	60%	60%
Act 117	\$1.18	\$1.0
Statewide Programs	\$2.79	\$2.89
Block Grant (ADM & Salaries)	\$27.1	\$27.7
Extraordinary (90% after \$50,000)	\$2.38	\$3.0
SPED Expenditures Reimbursement	\$62.6	\$67.9
One Rate for All Districts	55.5%	55.3%

2003 Act 117 Report

Goals of Act 117

- Increase general education capacity
- Improve consistency & cost effectiveness
- Improve cost containment
- Assess health/human services
- Assist with unusual costs
- Identify external factors affecting costs

Act 117 Outcomes

- ✍ Child Count reduced from 6.6% to 2.9%
- ✍ Service Plans increase slowing from 14% to 6.6%
- ✍ School-Based Medicaid rates increased from 66.5% to 83.9%

Act 117 Outcomes

- ✍ Qualified SPED Staff – 48 teachers received license; 70 more enrolled
- ✍ Schools focusing on ESS
- ✍ Supervisory union audits completed

Special Education Policy Role

Vision

- Set goals
- Provide direction
- Focus on high achievement for all students

Special Education Policy Role

Structure

- Create environment for high level learning
- Hire qualified staff
- Provide resources
- Staff & board know laws & policies
- Understand costs & revenues
- Assure qualified staff & programs
- Maintain confidentiality

Special Education Policy Role

Accountability

- Carry out legal responsibilities
- Set up assessment systems
- Assure accountability
- Ask right questions

Special Education Policy Role

Advocacy

- Lead community in setting goals
- School & community education advocate
- Educate & inform community
- Seek parent and community input
- Accountability to tax payers

Special Education Policy Role

Basic Law

- Provide “Free & Appropriate Public Education”
- Access to the general curriculum
- Inclusion in assessments
- Handle discipline related to disability
- Maintain due process rights
- Access to services
- Ensure confidentiality & access to records

Special Education Policy Role

Carry Out Law

- How will board know what's happening?
 - ask for updates
 - understand nature of staff & parent concerns
- Who can help?
 - special education administrator
 - building principal
 - building level special education coordinator

Special Education Policy Role

Maintain Accountability with Reports

- Student assessments
- Child count in special ed., 504, etc.
- School dropout numbers
- Educational Support Team updates
- Student risk behavior data

Special Education Policy Role

Link Routine Report Data to:

- action plan goal development;
- professional development programs;
- updating teacher evaluation system;
- school report cards.

Special Education Policy Role

Question how:

- is EST functioning;
- is impact of SPED evaluated;
- BEST \$ spent in supervisory union;
- available prevention programs are;
- to diminish SPED referrals with other programs
- professional development delivered;
- do parents know who can help?