

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN ARKANSAS:

**WHERE WE ARE, WHERE WE NEED TO BE,
AND HOW WE CAN IMPROVE**



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July 2016

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WHERE WE ARE, WHERE WE NEED TO BE, AND HOW WE CAN IMPROVE

by Bailey Perkins, AACF Education and Fiscal Policy Fellow
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Arkansas serves nearly 56,000 students through special education programs. The state constitution guarantees every child access to the advantages and opportunities of free, public education.¹ It also charges the legislature with adopting all suitable means to make it happen. This means that the state and its school districts have a responsibility to meet the needs of every student — including those with an individual education plan (IEP) — and to set them on a path to success.

Special Education is particularly prevalent in high-poverty schools. During the 2013-2014 school year, 41 percent of school districts had 70 percent or more low-income students. In about two-thirds of those districts, 11 percent or more of their students were in special education programs. Test scores and other evaluations reveal that most special education students aren't meeting educational targets. Advocates who work on behalf of families of special education students echo the data's findings.

The Legislative Task Force on the Best Practices for Special Education (created by Act 839 of 2015) has a unique opportunity to review the needs of students, teachers, and institutions statewide, and make recommendations to improve services and student achievement. Since August 2015, the Taskforce has met monthly to discuss data from 20 different special education categories. The following report covers a few of the key areas where changes can best help the state improve experiences for parents, teachers, and students.

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (commonly called IDEA), requires schools to give all eligible children with disabilities certain rights and opportunities for a quality education. This law specifically requires states to follow guidelines for:

- **Referring** – the request by a parent, teacher, or other educational specialist for a child to be evaluated.
- **Screening** – “the process of determining appropriate instructional strategies for curriculum implementation.”²
- **Evaluating** – “the data gathering process where procedures are used selectively with individual students.”²
- **Identifying** – determining the type of learning disability a child has.
- **Providing** services to children who qualify.



IDEA AND COMPLIANCE

IDEA has two governing parts: Part B (which covers youth between the ages of 3 and 21) and Part C (which covers infants and toddlers from birth to age 2). This report will mostly focus on Part B — or issues of 3- to 21-year-olds with disabilities. States must follow the requirements outlined in the law. To determine compliance, each state must also report the following information every year to the federal government:³

- **Graduation and dropout rates** of children with IEPs.
- **Assessments** – number of students participating in state assessments, and their scores,
- **Suspension and expulsion rates** of children with IEPs.
- **Least restrictive environments** – the percentage of children in least restrictive environments, or the percentage of children removed from regular classes and served outside of a traditional classroom.
- **Parent involvement** – the percentage of parents of children receiving special education services who report that schools facilitated parent involvement.
- **Disproportionate representation** – the percentage of districts inappropriately identifying students, and the percentage of districts with racial disparities in specific identification categories.
- **Evaluation timelines** – the percentage of children evaluated within 60 days of parental consent.
- **Preschool outcomes** – the percentage of preschool students that have improved their social-emotional skills, and acquisition and use of knowledge, skills, and appropriate behaviors.
- **Post-school outcomes** – the percentage of youth who had IEPs, are no longer in secondary school, and who are employed or enrolled in postsecondary school, or both, within one year of leaving high school.
- **Preschool transition** – the percentage of children referred from part C services who are found eligible, and have an IEP developed by their 3rd birthday.
- **Secondary transition** – the percentage of youth over the age of 16 who have an IEP and measurable, annual IEP goals and transition services.
- **Resolution sessions** – the percentage of hearing requests resolved through resolution agreements.
- **Mediation** – the percentage of mediations resulting in agreements.
- **State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)** – a comprehensive, multi-year state plan that focuses on improving results for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities.

These indicators help determine whether the state is in compliance with the federal law. Arkansas meets compliance in all areas. But when it comes to outcomes in achievement (whether children are performing at grade-level on literacy and math assessments), the state “needs improvement.” Only about one-third of Arkansas special education students are proficient in literacy, and about 41 percent in math. Arkansas special education students scored lower on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) than their peers in surrounding states. We must address factors that are contributing to poor outcomes so that we can achieve student success.

STAFFING RATIOS IN THE CLASSROOM

Every student deserves a high-quality education, and high-quality teachers are integral to success. Arkansas teachers must have the support and the tools they need to achieve. For many teachers — especially those teaching special education — class size matters⁴. Special education teachers on the Taskforce say their fellow educators feel overwhelmed and overloaded.

The maximum number of students varies per situation: If the classroom is co-taught, there must be at least one teacher per 30 students. If it's not co-taught (a regular, integrated classroom) then it is one teacher per 25 students, with a ratio of 2:3 without an IEP and 1:3 with an IEP. For a self-contained classroom, it's a ratio of one teacher per six students, and a full-time paraprofessional. But, for various circumstances, schools can apply for a waiver to increase ratios. The waivers are often granted because of the shortage of teachers. Large class sizes and the growing number of teachers working under a waiver make it difficult to give each student a quality, individualized education. Large class sizes also make completing IEP documentation for each child challenging.

RECOMMENDATIONS

One way to support districts and expand their capacity is to add more educators, reduce ratios, and give teachers paperwork relief by increasing funding in the adequacy matrix for special education. Picus and Odden, in a 2014 report, recommended that the matrix for funding special education should increase from the current 2.9 teachers per 500 students to 3.3 per 500 students.⁵



PAPERWORK AND IEP CONFERENCES

When asked about barriers or deterrents to teaching special education, educators across the country often cite “paperwork.” The IEP process is long and full of paperwork. IEPs require weekly reporting and an annual review for each student. The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) recently surveyed almost 200 special education teachers across the state, and found that:

- Nearly two-thirds of respondents spend three or more hours preparing annual review paperwork.
- Close to half of the respondents spend three or more hours a week on required special education paperwork.
- Almost all respondents spend time outside of regular school hours preparing special education-related paperwork.

Many teachers say that the paperwork they must complete per student is overwhelming. The stress of paperwork also deters people from choosing a career in special education. In response to this, the Special Education Division at the ADE is creating a task force to review state and federal requirements, identify overlap, and develop a way to streamline the process and ensure that the needs of students are being documented and met. It is important that teachers are not overloaded with paperwork, so that they have more time to teach. But it’s equally important that critical information to track student progress and meet federal requirements isn’t lost due to a reduction in paperwork.¹

Teachers are not the only ones with feedback about the IEP process. Parents and disability advocates also have concerns. After a student has been evaluated for special education services and diagnosed with a disability, an initial meeting takes place within 60 days of eligibility determination. Special education laws require conferences for each student with IEP “teams.” School districts must include parents; a regular education teacher of the child; a special education teacher; a school administrator; a person qualified to interpret the “instructional implications of evaluation results”; any person the school or parent wants to bring to the table (like an attorney or a specialist); and (when appropriate) the student.⁶ While this team is charged with developing a program that fits the student’s unique needs, the reality is often much different.

The documents used in IEP meetings are often lengthy and hard for parents to understand. In stories collected by the Arkansas Public Policy Panel, some parents say that they do not have a voice during their child’s IEP meetings. A mother in northeast Arkansas said:

“In meetings, it seems like our voices are not heard. There is always some reason or rationale as to why he isn’t able to get a better education. They already have their mind made up; they just need our signature. If we speak our mind, then it is overlooked, or we get over talked.”

A mother in central Arkansas said she referred her son for an evaluation but the school said that he didn’t qualify for services. She also said:

“He was very behind and having [a] difficult time getting through school and wanting to go to school. After hiring a private psychologist to re-evaluate him, he was identified as having a learning disability. But I had to fight to get him services because he had such a high IQ that his achievement was at the low average range, which was a huge discrepancy for him.”

Some parents even expressed that they feel like their IEP meetings are not implemented with fidelity. A parent reached out to Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families recently asking for help because:

“[Her] son’s IEP [was] not being followed and accommodations not being added after a meeting ... so the counselor or others couldn’t or didn’t know how to prepare/assist him for the state test that is coming up.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

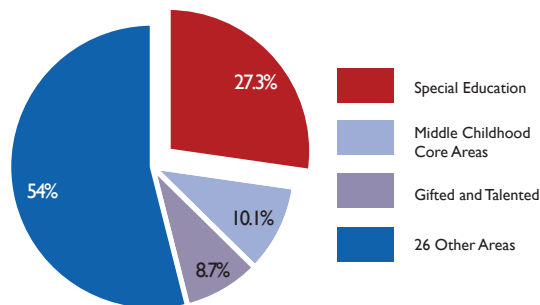
Schools should have a clearer way of informing parents of their rights and options. School districts should report to the ADE how they are informing parents about important issues, like how to refer their child for evaluation; what to expect in the process; how to submit grievances; and their ability to contact Disability Rights of Arkansas for more support or education. One idea is to create a short, easy-to-read document for parents that explains their special education rights and options. Schools should then be responsible for giving that document to parents and reviewing it with them during the initial IEP meeting.

TEACHER SHORTAGE

Information from the U.S. Department of Education shows that the teacher shortage in special education has been a long-standing problem in Arkansas that has worsened over time.⁸ According to the Bureau of Legislative Research, we have more than 7,000 people licensed to teach special education, but only half of them are teaching special education. Because of this shortage, more than half of Arkansas school districts and charter schools applied for waivers to get someone to teach it. Special Education has the highest percentage of waiver requests — making up one out of every four waivers requested.

Relying on waivers often means that someone who did not specialize in special education is teaching students with disabilities. To ensure that qualified people are teaching some of our most vulnerable students, it is vital for districts to become less reliant on filling teaching positions in special education through waivers.

SPECIAL EDUCATION HAS THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF LICENSURE WAIVER REQUESTS FROM SCHOOL DISTRICTS AMONG ALL SUBJECTS

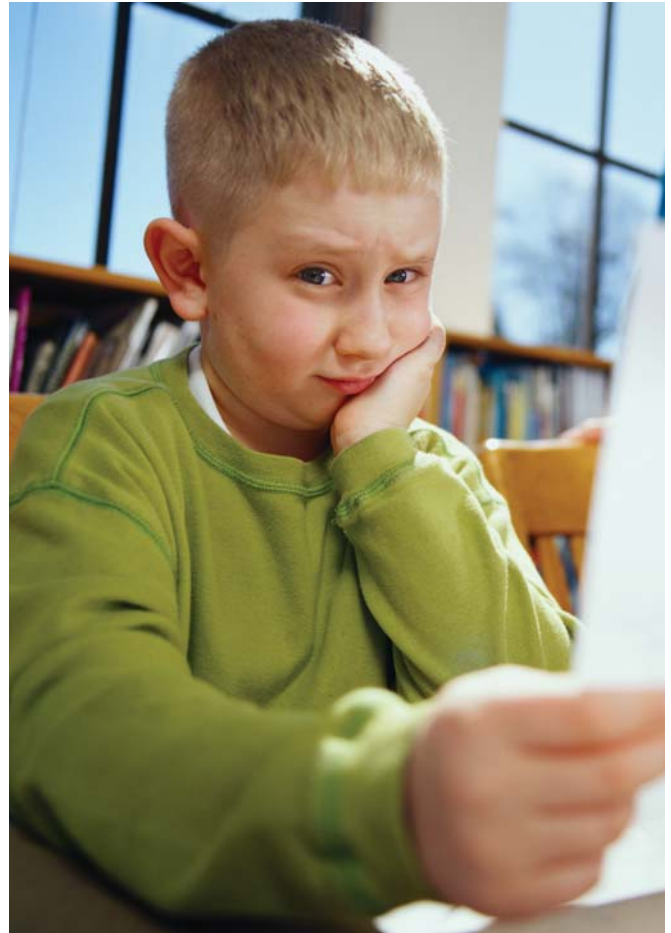


SOURCE: Data from the Bureau of Legislative Research Teacher Recruitment and Retention Report, April 12, 2016

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Support a paraprofessional-to-teacher program.

Creating a pathway for paraprofessionals to become teachers is a great way to help reduce the teacher shortage. This concept isn't new. In 2003, the Southern Regional Educational Board produced a report about the benefits of creating a paraprofessional-to-teacher program.⁹ Other states, including five Southern states, already have these programs in place. The San Francisco program alone has transitioned more than 172 paraprofessionals into teaching since its inception.¹⁰ Paraprofessionals work closely with students but do not normally stay long in their positions because the pay is so low; average salaries of paraprofessionals are just a few dollars above the minimum wage (or slightly above \$18,000/year).¹¹ Salaries and



contracts for paraprofessionals vary by district, with some paraprofessionals making even less than the amounts mentioned.

The great news is that the ADE has already been thinking about teacher recruitment and retention. They have established a workgroup dedicated to addressing the teacher shortage in Arkansas. Paraprofessional-to-teacher programs are part of their recommendations for addressing the teacher shortage crisis. It is vital that the General Assembly and institutions of higher education support the ideas brewing from this group and do what it takes to make the program work in Arkansas.

2. Establish financial aid incentives for those entering paraprofessional-to-teacher programs.

Financial supports for participants are necessary to make the program worthwhile. Massachusetts offers grants to pay for educational expenses.¹² Louisiana has a program that offers tuition exemption and stipends for participants.¹³ However ADE chooses to build its paraprofessional-to-teacher program, the General Assembly's support of developing an incentivized, paraprofessional-to-teacher program is critical to its success. An organization called Recruiting New Teachers, Inc., offers a toolkit to help states put paraprofessional-to-educator programs in place.¹⁴

IDENTIFYING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (CHILD FIND)

Another critical piece to special education success is making sure we identify the students who need services and properly provide the specific services they need. The ADE outlines how Child Find should work in Arkansas.¹⁵ Every school district, private school, and charter school must develop and maintain a written Child Find plan that outlines how they will locate, identify, and evaluate students with disabilities. The state also requires schools to annually publish their Child Find information to notify parents of their activities and when they will conduct screenings. Although these policies are in place, some students are still falling through the cracks. There are accounts of school leaders discouraging parents from getting their child evaluated for special education, which only furthers its stigma.¹¹

According to Disability Rights Arkansas (DRA), despite state laws and requirements, there are parents who ask for their child to be evaluated, but are ignored until DRA intervenes. In parent stories collected by the Arkansas Public Policy Panel:

- A mother in Northwest Arkansas reported that it took four years to get her son an IEP meeting and by then, her son was a high school senior.
- A parent in eastern Arkansas said that regular classroom teachers refused to follow the accommodations and modifications in the IEP.
- Other parents reported that their children aren't being given the supports they need to successfully follow the IEP.

Experts also say there are gaps in identifying students who have emotional disturbance disabilities. The ADE defines emotional disturbance as a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance¹⁶:

- A. An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors;
- B. An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers;



- C. Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances;
- D. A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or
- E. A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. The term includes schizophrenia. The term does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance.

Dr. Bruce Smith from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock noted that children who face emotional disturbances are usually labeled as troublemakers instead of being identified for the support they need. Current research supports that patterns of emotional and behavioral disorders begin at a young age and carry through school age and adulthood.¹⁷ Only one-tenth of 1 percent of students receives services for emotional disturbance, when experts project that 3 to 6 percent of children would qualify. While behavioral specialists are the experts who would work with students who have this disability, their current caseloads are already high. There aren't enough people qualified to work with students with emotional disturbances, so if more students were identified with emotional disturbance challenges, schools would be overwhelmed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Because gaps in identification exist, the state should strengthen its accountability process to ensure that school districts are abiding by their Child Find plan and reviewing parent requests on time.

ATTENDANCE AND TIME IN THE CLASSROOM

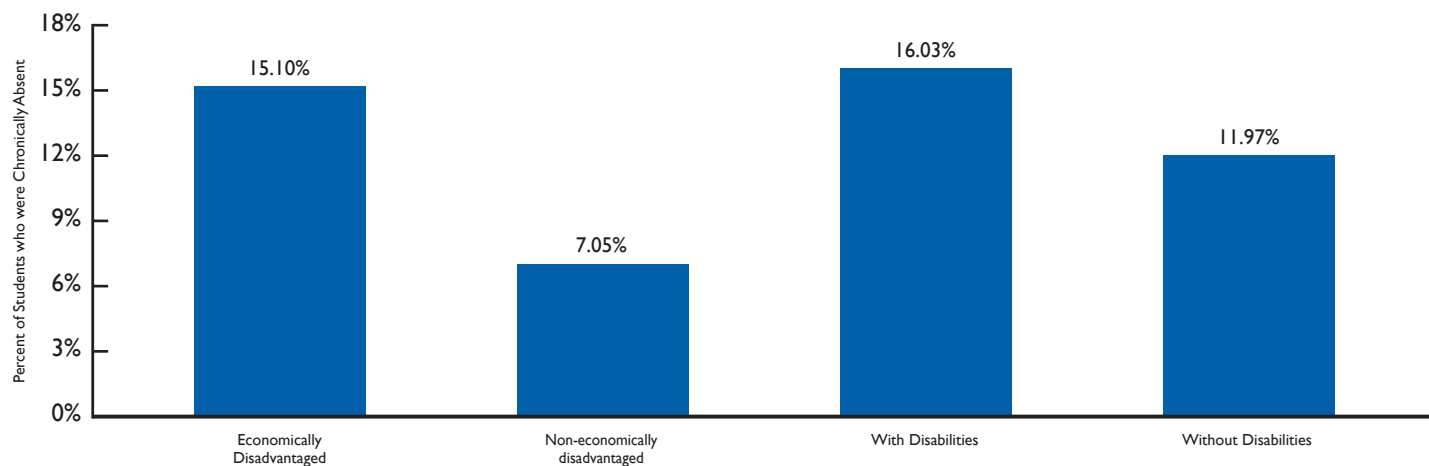
Attendance makes a difference in academic success for all children, especially those with disabilities. When students are chronically absent (missing more than 10 percent of school days in a year), they miss critical learning time. This leads to a greater likelihood of falling behind and dropping out, and lower scores on assessments.¹⁸ We specifically pointed out chronic absence in third grade because it marks the point at which children shift from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.” Our analysis shows that children in third grade with disabilities are more likely to be chronically absent than children without disabilities. Research finds that children who struggle in third grade have greater struggles later on.¹⁹

The Arkansas Campaign for Grade Level Reading has worked closely with school districts across the state to use data to create strategies to address chronic absence. Schools like Marvell and Springdale’s Parson Hills and Monitor elementaries are implementing best practices to markedly improve attendance among their students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Arkansas Campaign for Grade Level Reading is creating a toolkit to help administrators reduce chronic absences in their schools. This resource needs to be available to superintendents and school leaders across the state so that we can raise awareness about strategies to reduce chronic absenteeism for all students, including those with disabilities.

RATES OF CHRONIC ABSENCE IN SUBGROUPS OF THIRD GRADERS (2014-2015 SCHOOL YEAR)



SOURCE: Analysis by Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families using data from the Arkansas Department of Education



DISCIPLINE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

Arkansas has a problem with student discipline. Black children are consistently suspended and expelled at a disproportionate rate. And in special education, discipline plays a key role in academic outcomes. Data from the ADE supports this. In October 2015, the Special Education Division at ADE gave a presentation on discipline that showed a significantly higher proficiency rate in literacy among students who had no discipline removals. Fewer than 20 percent of students who had discipline removals were proficient, while over 35 percent of those without disciplinary removals were proficient.²⁰

The Division even looked at the amount of time students were out of the classroom. Students who were removed for more than 10 days were less proficient in literacy. We know that for all students, the amount of time they spend out of the classroom impacts their learning and achievement. It's especially true for students with IEPs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is vital that schools stop relying on suspensions and expulsions with special education students, and start using restorative approaches. For instance, the Minnesota Department of Education encourages the use of Restorative Measures in discipline. This change shifts the discipline practices of schools to a people-centered, conflict-resolution approach.²¹

FROM A FORMAL APPROACH TO A RESTORATIVE APPROACH

What was the rule and who broke it?	→	What was the harm, and who all was affected by it?
What is the punishment, per the student handbook?	→	How do we make amends, repair the harm, re-connect to community?
Administrator decision	→	Victim/Offender/Community decision

SOURCE: Language from a presentation by Nancy Riestenberg at the Minnesota Department of Education

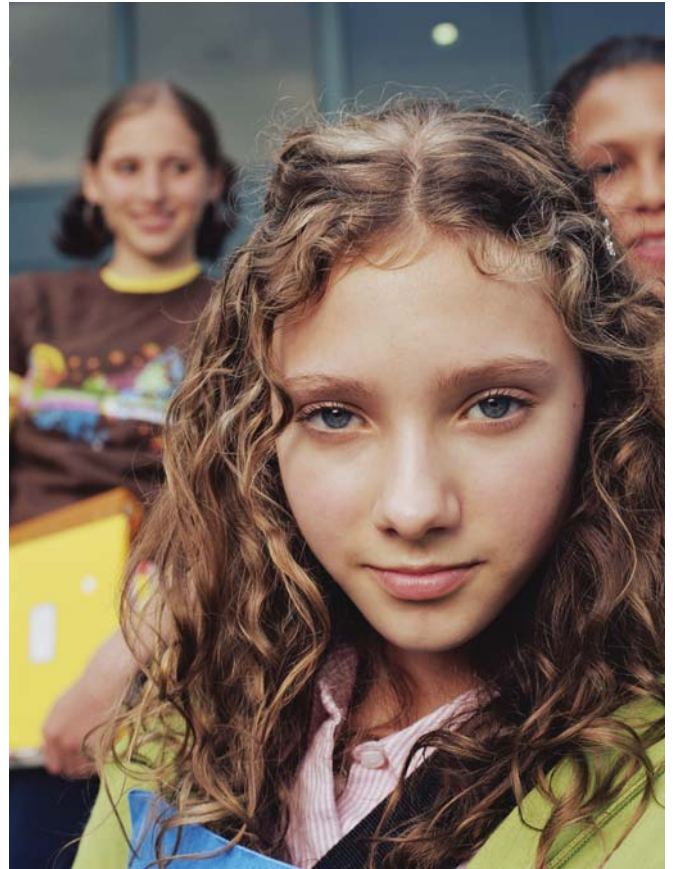


AVAILABILITY OF SERVICES

There are many organizations and institutions developing ways to serve children and adults with disabilities²², but they often work in silos rather than in a coordinated way. Services must be available and visible, but location of the services is also important. A majority of services are concentrated in northwest and central Arkansas, leaving people in rural areas of the state with fewer resources and supports.

Arkansas has a strong, state-funded entity that supports those affected by Autism Spectrum Disorders.²³ Housed in Northwest Arkansas through the University of Arkansas College of Education and Health Professions, Project Connect's goal is to expand and open more resource centers across the state to give greater access to rural communities.²⁴ To achieve this goal, the University would have needed \$1 million to enact statewide coverage. With the state's resources pulled tight from continued tax cuts, the centers were not funded. If funded in the future, the centers will model Project Connect with a disability expert, a program coordinator, and a parent liaison for family outreach.

Other states prioritize youth and adults with disabilities. In 2004, Florida created an Agency for Persons with Disabilities. The agency has 23 field offices and three developmental disability centers and serves 50,000 people.²⁵ Also in Florida, the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD) serves 18 counties in Florida's panhandle. FSU-CARD has "extensive experience serving individuals with ASD, and provides direct services for communication, social, and behavior problems, and also provides information, consultation, and technical assistance to families and professionals associated with CARD clients."²⁶ In 2012, Michigan established the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council (MDDC) with dedicated office space, council members who represent various parts of the state, and workgroups/committees who help make sure that people with developmental disabilities get support. The MDDC also oversees the Regional Inclusive Community Coalitions, a grassroots, statewide network of people with disabilities, family members, advocates, and service professionals who serve as the "self advocacy" arm of the council and "facilitate support services to people with developmental disabilities."²⁷



RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure that people in rural communities have access to services, the General Assembly should fund Project Connect's expansion throughout the state. They should also make sure that the staffers in those locations have the capacity to serve a variety of disabilities beyond Autism Spectrum Disorder. We then recommend revamping the Governor's Developmental Disability Council, or creating an ongoing entity that would give people with disabilities and disability advocates the opportunity to address their concerns and develop solutions. We also suggest that a resource document that lists the types of services available and contact information be made available and distributed to parents. That information should also have a dedicated, regularly updated space on the Special Education Division website.

INDIVIDUALIZING EDUCATION - RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI)

In 2004, the ADE adopted Response to Intervention (RTI) as the method of individualizing education to target the needs of all students — not just those with disabilities. This framework is a multi-tiered system of support for students that involves screenings, diagnostics, and progress monitoring; data-based decision making; and formative/summative assessments.²⁸ It's intended to be a method for prevention and intervention for students throughout their academic career. Arkansas uses a three-tiered approach:

- **Tier I** – Core instruction that is evidence-based and differentiated for all students.
- **Tier II** – Targeted, strategic interventions alongside core instruction.
- **Tier III** – Intensive interventions.

RTI looks a bit different in each school, as every district has autonomy over how they put the frameworks in place. Research has shown that RTI only works when the frameworks are used effectively and implemented with fidelity. It's also critical that students are in the right categories (Tier I, II or III). Experts from Arkansas colleges and universities support the use of RTI, but have concerns about how it is implemented. RTI is not and should not be used as a substitute for special education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To have a better picture of how RTI is working in Arkansas, the state should track student progress based on practices in each school.



OTHER AREAS

There are other areas in special education that are beyond the scope of this report, but are worthy of note for exploration and consideration in future research:

- **Reviewing distribution of funding for special education** – According to the Bureau of Legislative Research, school districts spend about \$7,694 per special education student. But what is spent per pupil does not necessarily mean that districts are spending the right amount to meet the needs of individual students. How much districts have to spend on special education and the types of resources available for teachers varies per district. When it comes to federal funding for states, it comes directly to the Department of Education and they decide how that money will be distributed. For 2016, Arkansas received \$112 million in federal money for special education.²⁹

The ADE has a formula in place from 1999 that takes population and poverty into consideration.³⁰ It is time to review funding allocation to ensure that federal grant funding for special education supports schools that need it most.

- **Addressing inequitable teacher salaries among districts** – Because there are inequities of resources among school districts, rural districts have tougher times recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers. According to a recent report from the Bureau of Legislative Research, more affluent districts (those who have fewer than 70 percent low-income students) have significantly higher percentages of retained teachers, while the poorest districts (where 90 percent or more of their students are low-income) have fewer experienced teachers.³¹ Since special education teachers have the highest percentage of waiver requests, it is plausible that special education is impacted.

It's important for the legislature to ensure that poorer school districts and rural districts are not put at a disadvantage because they can't attract and pay high-quality teachers.

- **Improving outreach to parents and guardians** – The special education website and documents distributed to parents should be displayed in a user-friendly way. While the right policies may be in place, it is difficult for the everyday Arkansan to find the information they need and understand it.



The state should look into increasing investments in outreach to parents for special education. This would help the state share information and more effectively provide resources to children.

- **Expanding the pipeline and financial capacity for support professionals in special education** – In addition to shortages among special education teachers, we have heavy caseloads for support staff who work with children with disabilities, like school nurses and behavioral specialists. Local experts during the special education taskforce meetings said that behavioral specialists have extremely high caseloads. Every district doesn't have a full-time nurse, and some schools even have to share nurses. Each district should have the capacity to hire at least one full-time nurse who is adequately paid.

Developing ways to recruit and maintain credentialed professionals is critical to moving Arkansas forward in special education.

CONCLUSION

Improving experiences in special education for Arkansas students, educators, and parents is doable. We must:

- Increase funding in the matrix for more teachers; take a comprehensive look at salaries.
- Streamline paperwork for teachers (without removing critical information).
- Create clearer ways of informing parents of their rights and options in special education.
- Support an incentivized paraprofessional-to-teacher program.
- Strengthen accountability methods of schools in the Child Find process.
- Expand services to rural areas.
- Use restorative discipline practices.
- Track student progress to measure impact of RTI practices.
- Fund distributions to districts for special education and meaningful professional development.

By doing these things, the state of Arkansas can help ensure that all children, regardless of disability, have an adequate education.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Arkansas State Constitution. Page 46, Article 14, Section 1. <http://www.sos.arkansas.gov/educational/teachers/documents/arkansasconstitution1874.pdf>
- 2 Definition referenced from the Arkansas Department of Education Special Education and Related Services 6.00 Evaluation - Eligibility Criteria July 2008 document, sections 6.03.1.3 and 6.03.1.6
- 3 Terms and definitions are from TAESE: Technical Assistance for Excellence in Special Education
- 4 Class Size and Student Achievement Research Review. Center for Public Education. <http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org/Main-Menu/Organizing-a-school/Class-size-and-student-achievement-At-a-glance/Class-size-and-student-achievement-Research-review.html>
- 5 Picus Odden and Associates. Desk Audit of the Arkansas School Funding Matrix and Developing an Understanding of the Potential Costs of Broadband Access for All Schools. September 5, 2014. <http://picusodden.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/9-5-2014-Picus-Odden-Asso.-AR-Desk-Audit-9-5-14a.pdf>
- 6 Referenced from section 8.05 of the Arkansas Department of Education Special Education and Related Services Individualized Education Program (IEP) Revised July 2010. https://arksped.k12.ar.us/rules_regs_08/RevisionstoRulesandRegulationJuly2010/8.00%20IEP.pdf
- 7 Thompson, Tracy. The Special Education Charade. The Atlantic. January 3, 2016 <http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/01/the-charade-of-special-education-programs/421578/>
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- 9 Smith, Christine L. Focus on a Untapped Classroom Resource: Helping Paraprofessionals Become Teachers. Southern Regional Education Board. April 2003. http://publications.sreb.org/2003/05s03_focus-paraprofessionals.pdf
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- 13 Louisiana's Tuition Exemption and Stipend Program for Teacher Aides and Paraprofessionals <https://www.teachlouisiana.net/prospect.aspx?PageID=29>
- 14 A Guide to Developing Paraeducator-to-Teacher Programs. Recruiting News Teachers, Inc. 2000. <http://www.usc.edu/dept/education/CMMR/paraed/RNTtoolkit.pdf>
- 15 Arkansas Department of Education Special Education and Related Services 3.00 Child Find. July 2008. https://arksped.k12.ar.us/rules_regs_08/1.%20SPED%20PROCEDURAL%20REQUIREMENTS%20AND%20PROGRAM%20STANDARDS/3.00%20CHILD%20FIND.pdf
- 16 Arkansas Department of Education Rules and Regulations Document about the eligibility and criteria for emotional disturbance diagnoses in special education. https://arksped.k12.ar.us/rules_regs_08/3.%20SPED%20ELIGIBILITY%20CRITERIA%20AND%20PROGRAM%20GUIDELINES%20FOR%20CHILDREN/PART%20I%20ELIGIBILITY%20CRITERIA%20AGES%205-21/D.%20EMOTIONAL%20DISTURBANCE.pdf
- 17 Reference from Dr. Bruce Smith's taskforce presentation on Richard M. Gargiulo's work about the under-identification of students with emotional disturbance behavioral challenges
- 18 Chang, Hedy N. Present, Engaged and Accounted For: The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic Absence in the Early Grades. National Center for Children in Poverty. September 2008. http://www.nccp.org/publications/pdf/text_837.pdf
- 19 Arkansas Campaign for Grade Level Reading <http://www.ar-qlr.net/the-issue/why-third-grade/>

- 20 Referenced from the discipline section of the presentation “Overview of the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) and State Personnel Development Grant” by Jennifer Gonzales before the Special Education Taskforce October 2015. <http://www.arkleg.state.ar.us/bureau/research/Publications/Task%20Forces/Legislative%20Task%20Force%20on%20Best%20Practices%20for%20Special%20Education/Presentations/State%20Systemic%20Improvement%20Plan%20and%20State%20Personnel%20Development%20Grant%20Presentation%2010%207%2015.pdf>
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- 25 Agency for Persons with Disabilities <http://apdcares.org/>
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- 27 Michigan Developmental Disability Council Regional Inclusive Community Coalitions http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71550_2941_4868_4897-305767--,00.html
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