

Urban Perspectives

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A PUBLICATION OF THE URBAN SPECIAL EDUCATION LEADERSHIP COLLABORATIVE

OCR Division Director Shares Views on Disproportionate Representation



The guest speaker and discussion leader at last Fall's Collaborative meeting in Milwaukee was Jean Peelen, Director of Elementary and Secondary Education Policy for the Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education. Her thoughtful and engaging dialogue prompted a followup interview in her Washington office where a wide range of topics were discussed specific to the issue of disproportionate representation of minority children and youth in special education classrooms and programs.

The following is a summary of that interview highlighting issues and examples which are of particular interest to Collaborative members. The summary is organized as follows:

A. Findings: What OCR has found as they conducted investigations of disproportionate representation in a number of urban districts around the country.

B. Comments: Director Peelen's observations on specific issues and OCR's activities.

C. Suggestion: Director Peelen's recommendations to urban education leaders who wish to be proactive on this issue.

A. Findings

Double or Compounded Discrimination

OCR has seen discrimination on the basis of both race and disability simultaneously.

continued on page 6

In this Issue:

- EDC Projects Investigate Leadership for Professional Development
- 16 Member Districts Participate in 3rd Harvard Institute
- Point/Counterpoint – Assumptions Underlie Arguments About Inclusion
- Race Matters at Collaborative Spring Meeting
- OCR Investigations Cast a Wide Net

Collaborative Grows to 30 Member Districts

In less than eighteen months of operation, the Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative has expanded its membership to 30 cities, with a total of 51 professionals enrolled as Members and Associates. In the five months following the Collaborative's Spring Meeting in Washington, D.C., six cities joined the network — four as a result of their leaders having participated in the 3rd Summer Leadership Institute on

Critical Issues in Urban Special Education at Harvard University.

The most recent enrollees are: Aurora Public Schools, Aurora, Colorado; Fairfax County Public Schools, Fairfax, Virginia; Fort Bend Independent School District, Sugarland, Texas; Humble School District, Humble, Texas; Montclair Public Schools, Montclair, New Jersey; and, Wauwatosa School District, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.

continued on page 3

EDC Projects Investigate Leadership for Professional Development

Three projects carried out by Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC): Teacher as Composer, Pathways for Learning, and Make It Happen! work toward a common goal to promote collaborative professional development of regular and special education teachers within a context of organizational support.

In “Teacher as Composer,” third and fourth-grade teachers along with reading specialists, Title 1 teachers, and special education teachers from two different districts met regularly to design instruction around literature units. In “Make It Happen!,” middle school teachers on an interdisciplinary team, which includes a special education teacher, collaborate on a research-based unit. In “Pathways,” multidisciplinary teams span grade levels to create a pathway to meet the developmental needs of students with disabilities and at-risk students.

The projects resemble one another in four fundamental ways:

Special and regular education teachers work together as collaborators.

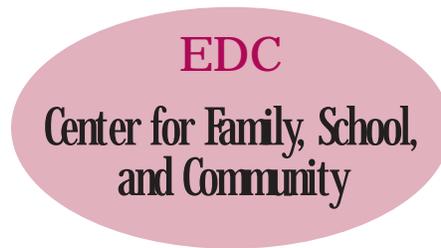
Although they often bring different backgrounds and perspectives about teaching, learning, and assessment, their expectation is to collaboratively engage in meaningful work that will push them to learn together and from one another.

A persistent focus on curriculum anchors collaborative teamwork. Within the context of designing particular curriculum units around motivating and relevant themes, teachers identify standards (desired outcomes), develop instructional activities that draw on varied resources and materials (often integrating technology), determine assessment tools and techniques, and, as relevant, plan ways to coordinate instruction across classrooms and teaching teams.

Teachers engage in an ongoing process of designing, implementing, and reflecting on the curriculum. With each successive iteration of the cycle of planning, implementation, and reflection, teachers develop deeper insights about the inextricable link between student outcomes and effective teaching practices.

Teachers balance the needs of the whole class with the needs of individual children. The driving force underlying all curriculum planning is an unwavering commitment to ensuring that all students—with and without disabilities—will be successful learners.

What kind of leadership does it take at the school and district levels to ensure that regular and special education teachers have the time and support they need to collaborate around curriculum with a focus on improving outcomes for students with diverse abilities and needs?



Vision and Comprehensive Plans

School administrators can work collaboratively with school staffs, students, parents, and the community to formulate a vision that focuses on students and curriculum. To be effective, the vision must address the unique characteristics, values, and priorities of the school community. The vision must set high standards for all students and recognize the importance of meaningful professional development for all staff. With the vision as the foundation, school administrators can lead the school community in the development of comprehensive plans for reaching its goals. School staff must engage in careful, collaborative planning of professional development approaches that are integral to the operation of the schools, shaped by the needs of the students, and responsive to the needs of staff. The plans must address both the conceptual and logistical issues raised by the particular approaches to staff development.

Local Champions

New and more effective approaches to teaching, learning, and professional development do not emerge spontaneously amid the rush of daily work in schools, and do not take root easily when imported from without. The most important ambassador for the cause of reform is often an insider who plants the seeds of the ideas and brings critical players together for the earliest discussions of new approaches. This “champion” is most effective when she or he has a clear and comprehensive vision for the future, and the power—formal or informal—to engage others in serious consideration of alternatives.

Structures for Addressing Needs

When school staff take responsibility for their own professional development and outcomes for all students, difficult issues will arise. School administrators can:

- Develop structures and mechanisms for addressing the emerging problems that exceed the reach of individual staff.
- Organize staff into student-focused teams that cross the traditional boundaries of professional discipline, grade level, and hierarchical authority.
- Establish school-level management groups that operate on the principles of shared decisionmaking and function specifically to solve problems that staff teams cannot solve.
- Assemble a districtwide coordinating group, including the superintendent, representatives of staff teams, school management groups, and the managers of the various “service departments” (curriculum, pupil services, business, personnel, etc.).

Time

Teachers and administrators alike remind us that there is little time in the traditional school schedule for staff to work in collaborative groups. One of the major challenges of many current reform efforts is to balance instructional time,

continued on page 5

16 Member Districts Participate in 3rd Harvard Institute

Taking advantage of the discounted registration fees, 44 professionals from sixteen member districts, several sending teams of special and regular educators, participated in this Summer's Harvard Institute on Critical Issues in Urban Special Education. The Institute was the third such event to be sponsored by Harvard and, by far, the most well attended. Total Institute enrollment was 162, representing 75 school districts from 22 states and three foreign countries.

This year's Institute was entitled "Systems Unification: Integrating Regular and Special Education" and explored the philosophical, political, fiscal, leadership, and programmatic challenges to more deliberate collaboration between categorical programs (e.g., Title 1, Special Education, Bilingual Education) and regular education programs. Collaborative Co-Directors, David Riley and John Verre, once again served as Educational Co-Chairs for the Institute.

Through a week of formal presentations and intensive deliberations within twelve small work groups, the following themes were probed:

- assessing and building system capacity for change;
- understanding and planning for systems change;
- developing a shared vision and systems change philosophy which guides practice and programs for all students;
- leadership/resources required for systems unification;
- professional development for staff and parents;
- fiscal and budgetary implications;
- disproportionate representation of minority students – race, ethnic, and class issues;
- parent and community involvement;
- unified service delivery models.

Collaborative member Dr. Ingrid Draper, Executive Director of Detroit's Office of Specialized Student Services, served as a member of the Institute faculty. She also led a contingent of Detroit staff to present the School District's

plans and achievements to date in bridging the special education/regular education chasm. Other faculty included Dr. Thomas Hehir, Director of the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs, Dr. Robert Peterkin from the Harvard Graduate School of Education's Urban Superintendents Program, Dr. Margaret McLaughlin from the University of Maryland, Dr. Edward Lee Vargas of the Santa Ana Unified School District, and Dr. Patricia Anthony from the University of Massachusetts.

Several collaborative member directors served as Small Group Facilitators. These included Ms. Frosyne Mensendick of Seattle, Washington; Dr. David Yamamoto of Ann Arbor, Michigan; Mr. Lawrence Finnerty of New Bedford, Massachusetts; Dr. Pia Durkin of Providence, Rhode Island; Mr. Donald Tangney of Fitchburg, Massachusetts; and, Mrs. Gayle Williams of Lawrence, Massachusetts.

Following Dr. Hehir's Keynote Address, a panel of Collaborative member Superintendents of Schools discussed their perceptions of critical issues in urban special education and what strategies each of their districts were taking to confront them. The panel was moderated by Dr. Peterkin (himself a former Superintendent of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Cambridge, Massachusetts), and included Superintendent Arthur Zarella of Providence, Rhode Island; Ms. MaryLou McGrath of Cambridge, Massachusetts; and, Dr. David Sneed of Detroit, Michigan.

Dr. Draper summarized the week as follows: "Participants left the Institute mobilized, energized, and focused on their role as leaders and change agents in promoting systems unification. They understood the imperative to take a proactive role in shaping a systems unification agenda with policy makers and stake holders in their districts. The week was historic in the sense that it served as a catalyst in creating a positive force for special education redirection in the context of systems change and unification. It will chart the course for greater

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collaboration and teaming in the nation's schools."

For the second year, a Collaborative dinner meeting was held mid-week of the Institute at the Harvard Faculty Club. Discussion topics included new member recruitment, Institute follow-up activities, and ideas for Collaborative activities during the 1995-96 school year. Attendees agreed that each would try to enroll at least one new member district during the upcoming year. It was also agreed that the Collaborative should sponsor a two-day "mini-institute" on Systems Unification during the year since a number of Member Districts were unable to send as many staff as they would have liked to the Summer Institute. ■

Collaborative Grows

continued from page 1

The complete listing of urban school district members as of September 1995 is as follows:

Athens, GA	South Bend, IN
New Bedford, MA	Fall River, MA
Worcester, MA	Lawrence, MA
Brockton, MA	Texas City, TX
Madison, WI	Milwaukee, WI
Ann Arbor, MI	Fitchburg, MA
Detroit, MI	Durham, NC
Yonkers, NY	Somerville, MA
Cambridge, MA	Lynn, MA
Flint, MI	Binghamton, NY
Wauwatosa, WI	Providence, RI
Seattle, WA	Jersey City, NJ
Fairfax County, VA	Montclair, NJ
Aurora, CO	Fort Bend, TX
Humble, TX ■	

Assumptions Underlie Arguments About Inclusion

Jay Heubert, who teaches courses on school law at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, offers the following analysis of the conflicting assumptions underlying the arguments of advocates and critics of the Regular Education Initiative (REI), first proposed by the U.S. Department of Education in 1986 as a strategy for unifying regular and special education. Heubert also finds five points of consensus, listed at the bottom. School administrators may find this framework a useful starting point for a discussion of beliefs about inclusion with teachers, parents, and school boards. (Reprinted with permission from *The Harvard Education Letter*, Vol. X, No. 4, July/August 1994, p. 4. Copyright © 1994 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College. All rights reserved.)

REI Assumptions

1. Labeling and segregation are inherently bad, just as racially segregated schools are “inherently unequal.”
2. Students with disabilities aren’t different from nondisabled students in any meaningful way; everyone is unique; all students “differ.”
3. Students with mild mental disabilities can best be served in regular classrooms rather than in resource rooms or more restrictive settings because
 - a. teachers have lower expectations when all students in a class have mental disabilities;
 - b. many students with mental disabilities just get a watered-down version of the regular curriculum;
 - c. even though the law calls for an individualized education plan, many mentally disabled kids don’t get truly individualized instruction;
 - d. special education classes are a dead end for many kids with mental disabilities;
 - e. virtually all regular education teachers can teach disabled students in regular classrooms and are willing to do so;
 - f. if there’s any doubt as to whether a mainstream setting or a more restrictive setting is best, the law says we must prefer the regular classroom; the burden of proof is therefore on those who argue that a more restrictive setting is superior.
4. Special education is, in general, too costly, fragmented, and inefficient.
5. Many students in special education are not, in fact, disabled, but are placed there by faulty referral procedures and questionable evaluations; kids who aren’t actually handicapped are really hurt if they are placed in special ed.

Counter-Assumptions

1. Labeling is not bad if the labels describe real and significant differences; it’s the only way to ensure that funds go to the neediest kids.
2. Students with disabilities *are* different from nondisabled kids precisely because they have disabilities and require special services to be able to learn most effectively.
3. Most kids with mild mental disabilities who are not mainstreamed are being better served in separate special education programs because
 - a. special education teachers have high expectations for their students;
 - b. the curriculum, designed for special classes, is not watered down but appropriate;
 - c. in smaller classes with specially trained teachers, mildly mentally disabled kids get far more individualized attention than in regular classes;
 - d. special ed is not a dead end; nationally, about 14 percent of special ed students move on to regular ed;
 - e. regular ed teachers don’t want disabled kids in their classes and don’t consider themselves trained to serve them;
 - f. given the historical failure of regular education to serve kids with disabilities, the burden of proof should be on those who argue that regular education teachers are suddenly ready and willing to accept this new responsibility.
4. Opponents of special education just want to save money at the expense of needy students.
5. Most kids in special education belong there; referrals are generally reliable; there is always an evaluation before placement; the evaluation tools are the best we have—don’t throw out the thermometer if it gives you information you don’t like.

Points of Consensus

1. More students with mild mental disabilities can be served in regular classrooms if regular education teachers get proper training and support.
2. It’s worth trying several ways of serving children with disabilities in regular classrooms before the students are referred for full evaluation.
3. We need better research on what works instructionally for students with different education needs.
4. We need improved coordination between regular ed, special ed, bilingual ed, and vocational ed teachers.
5. The role of administrators is crucial in improving communication, coordination, and support services for children with disabilities and their families and teachers, because administrators control the schedule and have authority over all those who need to work together. ■

Race Matters at Collaborative Spring Meeting

The Collaborative's Spring 1995 meeting, held in Washington, D.C., last April, focused on the topic of Race and Special Education. Collaborative Co-Director Renee Grant-Mitchell chaired the meeting along with a panel of Collaborative members Ingrid Draper of Detroit, David Yamamoto of Ann Arbor; disability consumer advocate Hiram Zoyas, President of Rehab Consulting, Inc., Chicago; Janice Jackson, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, U.S. Department of Education; and Chystal Kuykendall, President of Kreative and Innovative Resources for Kids of Potomac, Maryland, and author of *From Rage to Hope: Strategies for Reclaiming Black & Hispanic Students*.

As Ms. Mitchell explained, the purpose of the meeting was to "initiate a dialogue without a presumption that we have many answers but knowing that this is a topic we need to have the courage to open for discourse among ourselves and within our communities".

Participants were immediately challenged by perceptions that:

- "special education is complicit in supporting the institutional racism of the larger educational system";
- "minority special education leaders in primarily minority school districts don't appear to be doing any better than non-minority leaders in dealing with this racism";
- "the experiences of African-Americans back in the '20's, '30's, and '40's seem to be poised for repetition";
- "special education leaders have to stop being the agents of removal and become merchants of hope"; and,
- "schools are a microcosm of a sorting, non-egalitarian, uncaring society".

A wide ranging, often emotional discussion ensued identifying a litany of reasons why urban special education leaders need to be in the forefront of confronting the many subtle, many overt racist attitudes and actions of school policy-makers and personnel.

Suggested strategies included:

- networking with and organizing others who are/should be concerned about the issue in our school districts;
- studying referrals and use them as data for analysis of the extent of the problem in the system, individual schools and classrooms;
- encouraging a national dialogue on the topic;
- focusing assessments on the child's ability to succeed in the curriculum, keeping out the peripherals, the past, the anecdotal;
- concentrating more on teaching and learning than disability categorization; and,
- becoming more "culturally competent" (i.e., learning and appreciating the fact that various cultures understand, accept, and approach disabilities differently).

The Collaborative intends to follow up on the Spring discussion by inaugurating an electronic conversation on NCIPnet during the 1995-96 school year. The issue will be a standing topic on Collaborative meeting agendas where members will be asked to report on specific efforts there districts are making to ensure against racism in policy and practice.

[Recommended for reading is *Race Matters* by Cornel West (Beacon Press, Boston, 1993). West presents observations and opinions about the African-American experience and how mistrust, misunderstanding, and racism has diminished all Americans. Claiming that the Rodney King verdict "was merely the occasion for deep-seated rage to come to the surface", West speaks of a "silent depression ravaging the country". His provocative analysis of the racial crisis in America challenges all educators to rethink how the institution called "school" has to change if the next generation of African-Americans, and other minorities, are to share in the optimism that we like to think is a trademark of being an American.] ■

EDC Projects

continued from page 2

collaborative meeting time, and individual preparation time. If professional development is to be meaningful, comprehensive, and integrated into school operations, time for teachers to work together is essential. Allocation of time—an invaluable and scarce resource—is an issue to be addressed at all three levels—multidisciplinary team, school management, and district coordination.

Facilitation

With more flexible time and wider access to information, outside change agents offer broad perspectives and deep understandings of various approaches and the capabilities to translate research into practice. With the help of outside experts, school leaders can seek out internal staff to serve as local facilitators, and provide these individuals with support and resources to build internal capacity for leadership. The local facilitators include teacher leaders, a curriculum supervisor, and a school-based administrator. They schedule and organize meetings, gather needed materials and resources, moderate discussions, demonstrate, and document plans and emerging ideas. A facilitator—insider or outsider—is someone who has the talent, time, energy, and commitment to see an innovation start up and take root.

CONCLUSION

When it is done well, professional development is a collaborative and recursive process focused on curriculum and on the individual needs of students. Making this a reality in schools requires a broadening of the base of support that administrators provide for the process. The Teacher as Composer, Pathways for Learning, and Make It Happen! projects demonstrate that with appropriate organizational support, collaboration can work and is worth the effort because the ultimate beneficiaries are students—with or without special needs.

These projects were funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. For more information about these projects, contact John Verre at 617-969-7100, ext. 2407. ■

Disproportionate Representation

continued from page 1

First, there are many violations of the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) provisions of IDEA and Section 504. Students are placed in programs that are overly restrictive, and/or inordinate numbers of students are placed in restrictive placements. And at the same time, more minority (race and language) students are placed in these overly restrictive placements than their proportions in the general population would predict.

Disparate Treatment

OCR has seen disparate treatment of students on the basis of race.

Specifically, they have seen differential use of IQ test scores and grades to determine eligibility and placement of white and African American students. In a number of districts, the IQ test was the de facto sole instrument for determining eligibility and placement for African American students (a violation of both IDEA and Section 504), while IQ tests as well as other indicators, such as course grades, were used for white students. They also found differential application of pre-referral strategies on the basis of race, with fewer pre-referral activities for African American students, perhaps indicating lower expectations for these students.

The Influence of Poverty

OCR has found disproportionate representation of minority students in non-judgmental categories of disabilities, including hearing impairments, vision impairments, and other health-related disabilities. OCR believes that this supports the contention that the disproportion of minority students among students in poverty contributes to the overall disproportion of minority students in special education. OCR also believes, however, that poverty does not fully explain the even greater disproportion of minority students in the judgemental categories of disabilities, such as seriously emotionally disturbed and mentally retarded. In their investigations, OCR

examines, primarily, the relationship between special education services and race, and only secondarily, the influence of poverty.

B. Comments

1. Not all the regional offices of OCR are focusing on disproportionate representation. OCR discourages their regional offices from investigating “all problems.” They allow and encourage the offices to select their own target issues.

2. In all of their investigations, OCR prefers to focus on larger school districts—read “urban centers”—in order to get “more bang for the buck.”

3. In minorities and special education investigations, OCR examines pre-referral, referral, evaluation, placement, and access-to-education data. “What we’re looking for is different treatment of students, different treatment of minority students than (of) non-minority students. A ‘for instance’ is one of our Regional Offices found that a school district had schools with high concentrations of white students with very good pre-referral practices and lower referral rates, while schools with high concentrations of minority students had terrible pre-referral practices and high referral rates.”

4. OCR investigations generally “should not” extend beyond one year.

5. OCR draws no direct connection between categorization and disproportionate representation.

6. OCR is studying the issues surrounding the use of IQ tests, but has taken no position on this. OCR is interested in tests “...particularly, when they are used as gatekeepers; whether it’s for entry into special education or into medical school. It’s a very difficult issue and under a lot of discussion in the Department.

7. “We’ve always looked at Least Restrictive Environment as the notion that students with disabilities should be with students without disabilities on a sort of vague role model theory. I think what we’re realizing is that there’s something much more important here

which goes to the reason students with disabilities need to be with students without disabilities. That is, that the students without disabilities are getting access to the core curriculum.”

8. “The more special education becomes not a place, but an educational process, the less interested we will be from a civil rights perspective. In many places, special education has become a segregated setting, without access to quality, high standards education. Our interest will fade when special education and regular education have gotten together, and are all about the same thing, which is high standards education.

C. Suggestion

Director Peelen offered one major recommendation to Directors of Special Education concerned with disproportionate representation — be “on a constant search for why” disproportionate representation occurs, and use rather basic statistical analysis of available data as an investigative tool.

[Staff Note: We now know that the Northeast Regional Office of the Office of Civil Rights has chosen disproportionate representation as its targeted issue of choice. In response to the activities of OCR’s Boston office, OSEP’s Northeast Regional Resource Center (NERRC) at Trinity College in Burlington, Vermont, has decided to launch a technical assistance initiative in the area of disproportionate representation. We are collaborating with NERRC staff as they identify consultants from around the country and design technical assistance “packages” that would be available to the cities of New England, New York, and New Jersey. We have indicated our interest in disseminating their programs to all members of USELC.] ■

Urban Perspectives is a publication of the Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative. For additional copies or for information about the Collaborative, write or call EDC, 55 Chapel Street, Newton, MA 02158.; Tel. (617) 969-7100. *Collaborative Staff Members* are Renee Grant-Mitchell, David P. Riley, and John Verre.

OCR Investigations Cast a Wide Net

The Assistant Secretary for the Office of Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education, Norma Cantu, has targeted six priorities for agency investigations. Minorities and special education, and the education of limited-English proficient (LEP) students are two of these six priorities. In order to carry out their mandate, OCR is gathering data in a number of Collaborative member districts on minority student participation in special education programs, the education of LEP students, and the discipline of minority students. In these cases, the Directors of Special Education have been asked to provide certain information within thirty days of OCR's request. This summary provides an outline of the types of information that have been requested and may help other member districts prepare for future investigations.

Students, by race and LEP status, for the past three years:

- The enrollment of the school district, individual schools, grades levels and programs
- School lunch eligibility of special education and general education students separately
- The average daily attendance for the district, individual schools, grade levels, and programs
- Students referred for special education evaluation, by referring school, whether they were placed in special education or not, and the reasons for these decisions
- Students considered for and provided with pre-referral services
- Students receiving special education services, by level of restrictiveness, amount of time with nondisabled students, disability, and referring school
- Students in out-of-district placements, and those returned to the district, by disability
- Tests administered to each student placed in special education
- Duration of special education placements
- LEP students, by grade, language, and school
- LEP students not receiving services, and the reasons

- Students in gifted and talented programs
- Special education and LEP who were retained in grade, suspended, expelled, dropped out, attended postsecondary institutions

Staffing, by school, name, title, certification/endorsement, race, and language proficiency:

- Persons responsible for pre-referral
- Persons responsible for special education evaluation and placement
- Staff in programs for LEP students
- Bilingual psychologists, interpreters, and/or other bilingual personnel used in the evaluation process
- Staff who serve as interpreters for LEP parents
- Administrators of programs and services for students with disabilities and LEP students

Documents, including plans, program descriptions, policies, procedures, and guidelines:

- Identification, referral, evaluation, and placement of students with disabilities, including any modifications to these procedures for LEP students
- Identification, assessment, and services for LEP students
- Exit criteria from more restrictive to less restrictive educational placements
- Exit criteria from LEP programs
- Dropout from special education and bilingual education programs
- Monitoring the progress of students who have left special education programs and programs for LEP students
- Student discipline, including translations into languages other than English, and a description of how these policies are applied to special education students
- Communications with LEP parents in their native language
- Responding to complaints against District staff
- Programs and services for special education students, indicating the locations
- Programs and services for limited-English proficient students, by school
- Pre-referral programs and strategies, and modifications for LEP students
- Programs for gifted and talented students
- Computerized record-keeping systems, including types of information maintained and search capabilities

- Plans and programs to address disproportionate representation of Black and Hispanic students in special education
- Sample student cumulative file
- Student handbooks, including course guides
- District plans for special education, including services for LEP students
- Evaluations of the district's special education programs and programs for LEP students
- Court orders or consent decrees involving special education, or LEP students
- District 504 Plan
- Grant proposals and performance reports in special education and bilingual education
- Reports to the state department of education concerning the district's special education and bilingual education programs
- State audits of the school district
- Complaints filed by students or parents against staff, by date, nature, and resolution
- Parent information forms and/or booklets regarding special education and bilingual education

Criteria/Tests:

- The criteria, including names of tests, used to evaluate potential students with disabilities for eligibility for special education
- An explanation of the specific purpose for each of these criteria, and how the tests have been validated to assess specific areas of educational need for each racial group
- The specific tests — in languages other than English — used to evaluate LEP students with disabilities for eligibility for special education
- The specific tests used to assess the English proficiency of potential LEP students
- The criteria for placement in and exit from various special education programs
- The criteria for placement in gifted and talented programs

Collaborative staff are currently working with OCR in Washington to understand the legal approaches to be utilized by its regional offices and how these will be applied to school districts. We will provide this information to Collaborative members in upcoming meetings and publications. ■

Fax Back Form

If you are the special education director in a city and you are not now a member of the Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative, please consider joining us.

I want to enroll now. Please send me an enrollment form!

I am interested in knowing more about the Collaborative. Please send me materials and call me.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Fax _____

**We need your input concerning future activities of the Collaborative.
Please share your opinions and give us your advice.**

The Collaborative publishes *Research Briefs* for distribution to our members, summarizing findings from the best and latest research in special education and related fields. What issues or topics would you like to see addressed in upcoming *Briefs*?

In each issue of *Urban Perspectives*, we highlight promising practices in schools and programs around the country. If you know of an exemplary program or service, please share with us a brief description and the name, address, and phone number of a contact person. We will follow up and consider including the information in an upcoming issue of the newsletter.

General Comments and Suggestions:

Please fax your response to 617/969-3440 or mail it to ***The Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative, EDC, 55 Chapel Street, Newton, MA 02158.***

Fax Us At 617-969-3440

***The Urban Special Education
Leadership Collaborative***

c/o EDC
55 Chapel Street
Newton, MA 02158