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2nd Annual National Inclusive Schools Week Announced: pp. 2

Educating Special Education Teachers for Urban Schools

Elizabeth B. Kozleski
Director, The National Institute for Urban School Improvement

Nowhere is the issue of teacher shortage more pressing and extreme than in urban schools and districts across this country. This crisis is particularly acute in special education. While reacting to the crisis and ensuring that students in school today have adequately prepared, thoughtful, and caring teachers is essential, understanding how and why urban schools remain in crisis is essential to build a system that will work today, tomorrow, and for the foreseeable future. To do so is critical if urban students are to mature into successful adults with multiple life choices. What we know about the current state of urban education can inform the collective will of urban communities and policymakers to prepare and support the best generation of urban educators.

In urban centers, almost two-thirds of the students are neither European American nor middle-class. Recently, New York City guesstimated that more than 350 languages and dialects were represented in their school system. Diversity and multiculturalism are complex idioms to speak and act; our teachers, who are predominantly European American and middle class, lack the heritage and educational background to engage in such boundary-blurring vernacular (Gormley, Rothernberg, & Hammer, 1995). The five most frequently teacher-cited behavioral problems found in classrooms—1) aggression, 2) defiance of authority, 3) disruptive behavior, 4) goofing off, and 5) poor conduct—are culturally and circumstance bound (Johns, 1996). As Lisa Delpit (1995) has said, our schools are educating “other people’s children,” and they are often unprepared for the task. Another researcher, Martin Haberman (1999), found that teachers who are new to urban schools experience “culture shock” and never completely learn how to work effectively with urban students.

...teacher quality variables appear to be more strongly related to student achievement than class sizes, overall spending levels, or teacher salaries...

(Darling-Hammond, 2000)

continued on page 4
Celebrate the 2nd Annual National Inclusive Schools Week

SAVE THE DATE: DECEMBER 2-6, 2002!

The 2nd Annual National Inclusive Schools Week will be celebrated in classrooms, schools, and communities throughout the country during the first week in December. The purpose of the Week is to highlight the progress of our nation’s schools in providing a supportive and quality education to an increasingly diverse student population, while offering educators, students, and families an opportunity to discuss what else needs to be done to ensure that their schools successfully educate all children.

The Collaborative’s partner, the National Institute for Urban School Improvement will support the 2nd Annual National Inclusive Schools Week with an updated Celebration Kit—containing publications that speak to the benefits of inclusive schools, suggested readings for children and adults, meaningful celebration ideas and lesson plans, and materials to use in promoting the Week—and inclusive education—in your community.

The kit, a list of events, and a new Web site will be available in September. In the meantime, you can

- Check out the National Institute’s newly released report on the impact of last year’s celebration at http://www.edc.org/urban/publicat.htm#nisw—your school or school district may be mentioned! Read the 1st National Inclusive Schools Week: An Impact Report from the National Institute for Urban School Improvement to learn about how schools—including hundreds of those from Collaborative districts—took to this idea of celebrating progress.

- Introduce the idea of celebrating National Inclusive Schools Week to those in your school district and community. Direct them to the National Institute’s Web site—http://www.edc.org/urban—and share a copy of last year’s popular Celebration Kit, which is available for downloading at http://www.edc.org/urban/kit.html.

- Contact the National Institute at niusi@edc.org to ask questions, inform them of your plans to participate, and make suggestions. Did you participate in last year’s National Inclusive Schools Week? The staff at the National Institute would like to know how they can better support you in 2002.

What else can you do? Count on celebrating National Inclusive Schools Week every year during the first week in December! The National Institute plans on making it an annual celebration for as long as it sees a need to continue to build an understanding of the benefits of inclusive schools.
Parentally-Placed Students with Disabilities

The law addressing the provision of special education and related services to students with disabilities placed in private schools by their parents has been evolving over the years due to statutory and regulatory changes and judicial decisions. In the hope of providing guidance to its members, school professionals, and families on this complicated issue, the Collaborative and IDEA Local Implementation by Local Administrators (ILIAD) have produced “Parentally-Placed Students with Disabilities.” The new publication provides an overview of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) of 1997, its regulations, and relevant case law regarding parentally-placed students with disabilities in private schools.

The document also addresses the rights and responsibilities of school districts under the IDEA in identifying and providing special education services to parentally-placed private school students with disabilities, though it cautions readers to review their state law which may provide for greater rights and legal entitlements than the IDEA.

The publication notes that public school officials need to ensure that their policies and procedures provide for:

- Ongoing child find and evaluation services for students who are suspected of having a disability and in
Nowhere is the need for quality teachers greater than in inner city schools. Yet here, perhaps more than anywhere else except rural America, are the most needy students learning from the least qualified and under-prepared teachers (Eubanks, 1999). The teaching challenge is never more daunting than with students who have been viewed as “difficult to teach”—students who lack exposure to the basic mental, social, and emotional tools for academic success, for whom English is not their first language, and whose disabilities require differentiated, modified, or alternative instruction (Anyon, 1995). Urban schools, lacking resources and funding, are taking on this challenge and, in spite of pockets of success, are continuing to lag behind their suburban counterparts. Fully 59 percent of the beginning teachers surveyed in a recent Public Agenda Report (Farkas, Johnson, & Foleno, 2000) stated that they feel unprepared to work with students who were doing poorly in their classes. Moreover, only one in five teachers responding to a survey by the National Center for Educational Statistics reported that they are well prepared to work with students with special needs (NCES, 2001).

I’m finding it a whole lot harder to be a teacher than I thought it would be. Many of the practices I learned about in teacher education, and considered generally accepted, are unknowns out here in the schools.

The new academic standards and inclusive practices that I learned in teacher education seem obviously beneficial for students. Yet, a lot of the teachers that I work with in the field really don’t think they’ll work. They explain to me that these are just more changes that will eventually be replaced by other changes. The best thing, they say, is to just teach the way it works for you and your students. I worry about this though, I don’t know if they really are assessing and addressing their students’ needs. I want to implement the practices I studied in school. I think they are the best way to teach kids, but it is an uphill battle. Between my college textbooks and other disinterested teachers I feel like I don’t get enough support to really do anything well. I think if some of the older teachers really understood newer methods, they might want to try them. I know they really care about the kids in their classrooms, too.

I was so excited to start teaching. I accepted a position at a fully inclusive school because I really wanted to make a difference in kids’ lives. I thought working in an inclusive setting would allow me to offer equitable education for all kids. I had a vision of a classroom where all kids were nurtured and academically challenged. I really care about the kids in my room and have found myself in tears of frustration at the end of some school days when I run out of ways to help them.

Unfortunately, the story that Patty tells is not unusual. The distance between the vision for urban schools that work for diverse learners and the realities of what happens in schools is great. The mismatches between preparation and practice are spotlighted frequently in the media and in research. If good teachers make a difference, then we must challenge our urban teacher preparation programs to produce teachers who have the skills and knowledge sets to improve results for students. Patty felt a disconnection between her preparation to teach and life in schools which is quite common. Twenty-one percent of the recent graduates of teacher preparation report being poorly prepared to assume the role of teacher; another 38 percent report being under-
prepared (Farkas, Johnson, & Foleno, 2000). These results starkly contrast with the data from teachers who have been prepared through professional development schools.

Teachers who exit programs in which they learned to practice in “teaching schools” report feeling confident of their ability to teach, maintain discipline in their classrooms, and work with diverse students (Abdal-Haqq, 1998). These “teaching schools” are staffed not only with teachers hired by the district, but with university teacher educators who model lessons, support teacher candidates, work with mentor teachers, and support whole school improvement efforts. Generally, these schools are referred to as professional development schools since the intended result is both better prepared new teachers and a highly skilled teaching staff enriched by their roles as teacher educators.

Moreover, teacher candidates who learn to practice in urban professional development schools take jobs in urban areas and stay to teach. The professional development school model as a vehicle for pre-service preparation helps to create both the opportunity for practice teaching and for improving the use of research-tested strategies in the field (Levine, 2002). In a recent survey of 500 graduates of urban teacher preparation programs, 90 percent of first-year teachers reported that they were well prepared in their urban professional development schools and intended to remain in urban schools (Kozleski, in preparation). These data provide important evidence that show that when education students learn to become teachers in urban schools, they are more prepared to overcome the usual hitches and glitches (e.g., high turnover of building administrators), and sustain their practice.

Even more recently, some cities have partnered with local universities to set up teacher-in-residence programs in which candidates for teaching careers are recruited by the district and admitted to a jointly governed teacher preparation program. In these programs, teacher candidates are paid as first-year licensed teachers but must pay tuition for teacher preparation training. In return, they receive mentoring in their own classrooms in addition to summer boot camps and professional development classes during the year. Mentors are retired master principals and teachers who are paid contractually by the teacher preparation program and work with as many as 10 teacher candidates for an entire year. This results in about 10 to 12 mentors who, in addition to their mentoring tasks, must participate in biweekly curriculum and mentoring meetings lead by the teacher preparation program. Mentors learn to support their teacher candidates, follow the prescribed curriculum and performance-based assessments required of the teacher candidates, and identify teacher candidates who are having difficulty with their teaching assignments. Because teacher candidates must successfully complete performance-based assessments, these programs are reporting similar levels of success to the professional development school models. That is, the teachers-in-residence are staying, completing their programs, and continuing to work in urban schools.

The most successful programs—those in which teacher candidates meet high standards for graduation that are measured by performance-based assessments and subsequently stay in urban schools to continue their careers—are characterized by partnerships between local districts and universities. These partnerships are sustained because the focus of the partnership is on professional development for all teachers. When professional development departments within districts work with local universities to develop a coherent and aligned curriculum for pre-service teachers, they must also examine what veteran teachers are learning and discussing to make sure that they have the skills needed to support the performance-based assessments that teacher candidates must complete.

To sustain these partnerships, university and school-based faculty must come together as colleagues and partners around practice. Trust develops when university

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The Continuous Improvement Team in Montgomery County Public Schools

A Strategy for Increasing Accountability and Improving Special Education Services

Madeleine Will and Ricki Sabia, Co-Chairs, Montgomery County Public Schools’ Continuous Improvement Team

In 1999, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) in Rockwell, Maryland, established a Continuous Improvement Team (CIT) to monitor the quality of its special education programs and services. Madeleine Will and Ricki Sabia, parents of students who received special education services in the county, serve as co-chairs of the CIT, which consists of a diverse group of parents, general and special education teachers, principals, curriculum and assessment specialists, and other administrators. Dr. Margaret McLaughlin of the University of Maryland oversees the team’s research activities.

The CIT was initially formed as a Corrective Action Planning Committee (CAP) in response to monitoring conducted by the Maryland State Department of Education. The monitoring found a series of procedural and compliance issues that needed to be corrected. The CAP Committee was charged with reviewing and monitoring the implementation of the corrective action plan. As a result of these issues, the CIT was created and asked to conduct a random record review to evaluate the effectiveness of professional development in areas related to compliance and parent involvement.

The CIT was so successful in identifying key areas for program improvement that Dr. Raymond Bryant, Associate Superintendent for the Office of Student and Community Services, decided to maintain it as an ongoing external committee that would serve as an accountability check for the special education program. The CIT membership was expanded to include parents and key staff from MCPS. The CIT reports annually to the superintendent and more recently to the community at large on the status of special education throughout MCPS using the same indices outlined in the county’s accountability plan: quality, productivity, proficiency, and equity.

The CIT began its work in accountability by identifying a set of measurable indicators of program effectiveness (see examples on pp. 7). This process acknowledged that students receiving special education were part of the overall system of accountability in the county, while it recognized that there are some unique and important indicators in special education that should be examined. Therefore, the indicators included a variety of student performance data obtained from state and district assessments as well as other academic indices: Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) data, disciplinary data, and teacher, student, and family perceptions of programs. Identification of indicators was a participatory process involving all members of the CIT. The CIT piloted the indicators in nine middle schools to understand which of the data would inform school improvement efforts. The nine schools were selected based on their geographic and demographic diversity as well as their array of special education programs and service models.

Following the development of the indicator list, MCPS staff, working with Dr. McLaughlin, began to identify existing data sources and areas in which new data would be required. This process was very informative. Before beginning this process, special education administration relied on an extensive, but traditional set of special education data from which they generated reports focusing on the number and characteristics of students receiving special education and related services, proportions of students receiving different services in different settings, and student performance and exit data. However, these data were typically reported only at the district level.
With over 16,000 students receiving special education services, the aggregated data were not precise enough to lead to specific program improvement, let alone school improvement. Therefore, the first goal of the CIT study was to capture as much data as possible at the school level. This level of analysis is both consistent with general education accountability and necessary for school improvement planning. Furthermore, the CIT was interested in identifying data that were reliable and stable over time and could become part of a school-level accountability system.

As staff began to identify data sets as well as other data collection efforts within the system, it became clear that there were additional data that could better inform special education, including many more academic indicators, such as course-taking and career path preferences. It also became clear that the results of some important system-wide data collection efforts, such as an annual staff, parent, and student satisfaction surveys, were not able to be disaggregated by special populations, such as students with disabilities. Furthermore, all of the data obtained from these sources was reported to principals for use in school improvement plans. It seemed very critical to make sure that, to the extent possible, principals have information about their whole school as well as certain sub-populations.

As a result of this “data discovery,” one of the first recommendations of the CIT to the superintendent and the Board of Education was that all data that are reported to schools be disaggregated by special education status to the extent possible. This level of analysis is both consistent with general education accountability and necessary for school improvement planning. Furthermore, the CIT was interested in identifying data that were reliable and stable over time and could become part of a school-level accountability system.

There were other key indicators related to school climate, leadership, and parent/school communication that were not easily captured in the available quantitative data. As part of the pilot, the CIT conducted interviews with principals and focus groups with parents in the nine schools to identify specific issues and data needs. Results of these efforts are pointing to several other areas that need to be regularly and systematically investigated at the school level. Simple questionnaires for parents are being developed to obtain information about their satisfaction with the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process and the instructional program. These will be routinely distributed to parents of children who are receiving special education services at the school level. The responses also will be coded and analyzed by school.

**EXAMPLE A**

**Goal 1: Ensure Success for Every Student**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators:</th>
<th>Source of data or information:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance of students with disabilities on state or district assessments</td>
<td>Disaggregated rates by disability, program, race, grade, gender and FARMS (by schools &amp; clusters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation rate: diploma &amp; certificate</td>
<td>Analyze by school mobility rates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*There are benchmarks for all indicators.

The mission of the CIT encompasses all programs and services provided by MCPS’s Department of Special Education and has the capacity to bring together various stakeholders to review initiatives and policies in a truly collaborative manner. The CIT works to improve the education of children with disabilities by creating a unified system of accountability and a school improvement process that is data-driven and fully inclusive of the needs of students with disabilities.

**EXAMPLE B**

**Goal 2: Provide an Effective Instructional Program**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator:</th>
<th>Source of data or information:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent of students with disabilities spend in the general education classroom</td>
<td>SEDS data disaggregated by rates, disability, program, race, grade, gender and FARMS (by schools &amp; clusters)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To download a draft copy of the complete indicator list, visit the Collaborative’s Resources of the Month at http://www.urbancollaborative.org.
Inclusion Progress in the Rochester City School District

Marie Cianca, Lead Principal, Education of Exceptional Children, Rochester City School District

Introduction
Broad district and community commitment to academic benchmarks and high standards for all students has produced improvements in Rochester, New York. A recent Federal Court decision to lift a 21-year-old Consent Decree acknowledges the “dramatic” and “substantial” progress of this school district. The January decision from the Honorable Judge Michael A. Telesca of the United States District Court reads: “while the school district has shown ample evidence of wholesale, system-wide reform in the way it provides special education services to special needs students, it has also demonstrated that it has reformed its practices at perhaps the most important level: the classroom.”

Rochester in 2002 is socially, educationally, and economically very different than it was during the time the decree was ordered. There are fewer people and greater levels of poverty. Between 1960 and 1990, Rochester lost 27 percent of its population. In addition, over the past two decades, the gap in median family income has widened between city families and county families from $1,100 in 1980 to $1,500 in 1990. As of 1995, Rochester had a higher per capita property crime rate and murder rate than Buffalo, Syracuse, Albany, and New York City. Today, 85 percent of children in our city elementary schools are at the poverty level, compared to a 22.4 percent in 1980 (Rochester 2010 The Renaissance Plan, 1999).

In 1983, 2,479 of the district’s 32,602 students received special education services. At that time, most students with disabilities were instructed in special education classes. Some were in separate buildings. Today, Rochester City School District serves over 44,000 students in public and nonpublic schools with approximately 6,600 students classified as students with disabilities.

Judge Telesca’s decision to release Rochester from its long-standing Consent Decree was possible because of the hard work and dedication of teachers, principals, families, and central administration under the leadership and direction of Dr. Clifford B. Janey, Superintendent of Schools.

The article that follows includes some key accomplishments as a result of this concerted, collaborative effort towards inclusive schools.

Reaching Our Inclusion Target
Rochester established an inclusion goal of 70 percent in 1997 at a time when our inclusion rates were below 20 percent across the district as a whole. We reached our goal at the elementary level in June 2001, because we had a superintendent who was able to convey a vision that this was important for all kids. Dr. Janey purposefully set the mission for inclusion with building principals across the system and then followed up with the necessary training, support, information, and encouragement. He consistently provided data on our progress, which pushed us forward. Today, we are approaching our goal at the secondary level, as well, with over 50 percent included. The belief system and the vision conveyed at the top caused the leadership in all constituency areas to commit to an inclusive philosophy. As a district, we clearly understand that inclusion provides critical instructional access for students with disabilities—access that is necessary for academic achievement.

The Career in Teaching Program in Rochester with its nationally recognized Mentor/
Intern Program, which emphasizes training and support to general education and special education teams, provided teachers the necessary encouragement to change and try new practices that build inclusion. The Special Education Training and Resource Center (SETRC) is the largest districtwide provider of professional development in special education and is part of a statewide network of such providers. SETRC’s mission is to promote increased access to general education and improve academic achievement of students with disabilities through professional development. During the 2000-2001 school year, SETRC provided a total of 459 training hours of professional development to 5,450 participants across the district. Topics ranged from preparing students with disabilities for New York State Learning Standards (e.g., Curriculum Adaptations and Modifications, Differentiated Instruction, Cooperative Learning, Multiple Intelligences Models), to inclusion strategies (e.g., Co-Teaching, Co-Planning), prevention and support services training (e.g., Functional Behavioral Assessment, Positive Behavior Interventions), and assistive technology training.

Table 1: Percent Increases in Inclusion Over Four Years

Table 1 shows increases in inclusion across the board, allowing much greater access to instruction in the general education setting.

**Students with Disabilities Participation in Regents and Higher Level Courses**

The participation of students with disabilities enrolled in higher level courses has increased dramatically from seven years ago. The percentage of students with disabilities participating as part of the total population has increased by 5.3 percent in English, 4.6 percent in social studies, 4.8 percent in mathematics, and 4.96 percent in science. Tables 2 illustrates the substantial increase in

Table 2: Student Enrolled in Regents and Higher Level Courses

the number of students with disabilities enrolling in the state’s Regents exams or higher level courses over the last three years.

Table 3 shows that there is a clear parallel in increased passing rates for students with disabilities in Regents and higher level courses with a passing rate increase over three years in each subject area. This progress comes at a time when expectations are higher, courses are more rigorous, and the district has created a clear policy initiative to hold all students to the same standards of accountability.

**Narrowing the Achievement Gap**

In spite of our philosophical progress, achievement rates for all of our students

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continued on page 11

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**Table 2: Student Enrolled in Regents and Higher Level Courses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>English</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General education students</td>
<td>6,203</td>
<td>6,654</td>
<td>6,794</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with disabilities</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>453</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of total population</td>
<td>2.02%</td>
<td>3.43%</td>
<td>6.22%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Social Studies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General education Students</td>
<td>7,252</td>
<td>7,231</td>
<td>6,577</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with disabilities</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>546</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of total population</td>
<td>3.01%</td>
<td>6.15%</td>
<td>6.56%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mathematics</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>General education Students</td>
<td>7,482</td>
<td>7,365</td>
<td>8,232</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with disabilities</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>559</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of total population</td>
<td>2.57%</td>
<td>5.13%</td>
<td>6.35%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Science</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General education Students</td>
<td>4,617</td>
<td>4,927</td>
<td>4,781</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with disabilities</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>283</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of total population</td>
<td>2.24%</td>
<td>4.77%</td>
<td>5.59%</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Table 3: Student Passing Regents and Higher Level Courses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>English</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General education students</td>
<td>69.06%</td>
<td>71.31%</td>
<td>73.70%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with disabilities</td>
<td>51.48%</td>
<td>55.14%</td>
<td>65.36%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Studies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General education students</td>
<td>71.37%</td>
<td>70.85%</td>
<td>73.53%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with disabilities</td>
<td>58.22%</td>
<td>58.86%</td>
<td>66.12%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mathematics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General education students</td>
<td>62.46%</td>
<td>58.35%</td>
<td>60.86%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with disabilities</td>
<td>43.65%</td>
<td>41.91%</td>
<td>49.46%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Science</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General education students</td>
<td>63.22%</td>
<td>61.84%</td>
<td>60.86%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with disabilities</td>
<td>51.77%</td>
<td>48.76%</td>
<td>56.18%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Education Special Education Teachers for Urban Schools

faculty are participating in the daily life of the school. Professional development planning between the district and the university must also be done collaboratively to meet all pre-service and in-service goals.

Teacher quality and quantity is inextricably tied to student learning. The degree to which students can be said to be well educated is strongly related to the degree to which a system of personnel preparation has resulted in every student having a highly skilled and competent teacher (Galluzzo, 1999). Therefore, policy and practice in urban teacher preparation must account for the needs of its consumers. It seems logical and essential that the outcomes that schools use to measure success are ultimately the outcomes by which personnel preparation must also measure success: state and local student outcomes or standards (Schalock, Schalock, & Myton, 1998). The extent to which schools and personnel preparation do this greatly influences how the public measures the worthiness of the effort. While many educators worry about too much standardization of outcomes and too much accountability, public and private sector trust in education is largely dependent on clear evidence about what and how well students are learning. ■

References

For more information, visit the National Institute’s Web site: http://www.edc.org/urban.

Parentally-Placed Students with Disabilities

need of special education who are being home schooled or placed by their parents in a private school

• Timely and meaningful consultation with appropriate representatives of private school students in order to obtain information for considering: which students will receive services; what services will be provided; how and where the services will be provided; and how the services will be evaluated.
• determining the proportionate share of federal special education funds to be used for services
• developing, implementing and reviewing services plans for students with disabilities in private schools who will be receiving special education or related services from the district
• affording selected due process procedures to parents. ■

Copies of this publication may be ordered from the Collaborative or downloaded at: http://www.idea.practices.org/resources/detail.php?id=22082.
Inclusion Progress in Rochester City School District

must still improve. The gap for students with disabilities is still present but is narrowing. Table 4 shows that the achievement gap over has been cut in half in the last three years.

The results for the first three years of the New York State 4th Grade English Language Arts (ELA) Assessment are also very hopeful. This exam is a key benchmark for student performance in content area standards for reading, listening, and writing in elementary school. The gap for students with disabilities is narrowing steadily and significantly, mainly because of access to opportunities and programs in general education.

Success Stories Abound
One of our special education teachers shared a wonderful story about a student who earned a diploma a few years ago from one of our high schools. This young man had always been in self-contained special education classes. In high school, his teachers—with some reservations—transferred him to general education courses with specialized support. At the end of the first marking period, he was failing many of his core courses. Instead of being discouraged, the student was overjoyed. “Thank God,” he said. “My teachers are finally telling me the truth about the level of my work. I always knew that I could do better but when I was in a special class, my teachers always told me I was doing just fine.” Newly motivated, the young man went on to get a local diploma. There have been several others like him.

Conclusion
When all students are expected to progress and are viewed as capable learners with unlimited futures, extraordinary achievement results. To maintain momentum, we must continue our commitment to inclusion, curriculum participation, achievement, teacher training, and due process procedures. Federal and state governments also need to lend their support so that all the appropriate resources are made available to children in urban districts who rely on their education to level the playing field.

Reference

For more information, contact Marie Cianca at: Marie.Cianca@rcsdk12.org.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average gap between students with disabilities and general education</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Narrowing the Gap on Regents and Higher Level Courses

4th Grade ELA Exam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of students meeting state standards (of total 4th grade population)</th>
<th>January 1999</th>
<th>January 2000</th>
<th>January 2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of students with disabilities meeting standards (of 4th grade students with disabilities)</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>41.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of newly included elementary students with disabilities participating in general education</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
<td>42.0%</td>
<td>61.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Narrowing the Achievement Gap on the ELA Exam
Audio Tapes Available!
Rethinking Learning Disabilities: A Teleseminar with G. Reid Lyon

Reid Lyon
In "Rethinking Learning Disabilities," a paper written for the Fordham Foundation’s publication Rethinking Special Education for a New Century, Reid Lyon and his co-authors take a provocative look at the traditional methodologies for assessment, identification and instruction of students with learning disabilities all within the context of the upcoming reauthorization of IDEA.

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- Metropolitan School District of Lawrence Township, Indianapolis, IN
- Metropolitan School District of Washington Township, Indianapolis, IN

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