

Lane ESD Efficiency Improvement Plan

Demographics:

The Lane Education Service District provides resolution services to the 16 school districts within Lane County. One of these resolution services provided to local school districts is the Life Skills Education Program. This program serves students from kindergarten to age 21 that have severe developmental disabilities. All students have an I.Q. of 55 or below. Students have a wide array of abilities and disabilities. Some are greatly impaired by autism, physical impairments, or behavior problems. The Lane ESD Life Skills Program currently serves 324 students within 31 classrooms throughout the county. All classrooms are housed in general education buildings. Each classroom has a classroom teacher and 5 – 7 educational assistants. Currently each classroom has a heterogeneous mix of students.

The students served in our classroom have a wide array of abilities and disabilities. This includes autism, OI, TBI, Down Syndrome, behavior issues, hearing impairments, visual impairments, and behavior issues. All have developmental disabilities. With such varying students needs in our classrooms teacher and educational assistants must have knowledge and skills in many areas.

Theory

Historically the Lane Education Service District has served its Life Skills Students in homogenous classrooms. In other words, each of our thirty-one classrooms have a combination of students that have behavior issues, physical impairments, developmental disabilities, and higher functioning students that have a curriculum with an academic focus.

Recently, probably stemming from our current economic situation, some staff have initiated conversation in regards to the efficiency of classrooms. Some believe the ESD would be better served to have classrooms that serve students that have a common disability instead of having a heterogeneous grouping.

The theory behind making this change is that classrooms would operate more efficiency if students were grouped instead of mixed. Examples of increased efficiency includes; specialists (such as autism consultants, behavior specialists, occupational therapists) would do less traveling since students would not be spread out across classrooms, teachers would have less professional development needs since they would be working with students with one disability, and each classroom could serve more students since they would have common needs.

Options:

-Continue to group students heterogeneously. Each of our 31 classrooms would continue to serve students with a wide arrange of disabilities. Each classroom would continue to serve students that have cognitive impairments, physical disabilities, orthopedic impairments, behavior issues, and autism.

-Serve students homogeneously. Classrooms would begin to serve students in a grouped manner in which all students have the same disability. A classroom would serve only students that are severely impacted by autism, impacted by behavior, impacted by orthopedic impairments, or have an academic focus.

- Combination of heterogeneous and homogeneous

Figure 1 - 1

Classroom Grouping	Positive	Negative	Misc. Notes
1. Homogeneous	Increased efficiency	Lack of interaction with all students	Increased efficiency would include: Specialist would have less travel
2. Heterogeneous	Students are able to interact with all types of students. Example: non-verbal student is able to be with verbal student	Less efficiency. Teachers and consultants must work with students that have array of dis.	Since teachers work with all students they must be trained in many areas
3. Combination	Flexibility	Classrooms would continue to be less than efficient	Possibly: Homogeneous classrooms for OI and behavior students

Survey Info and Survey Questions

Questions on Surveys to Parents:

- What needs does your child have?
- Do you think your child would perform better in a classroom with only students with similar needs?
- What would be the advantages of your child being educated in a room with only students with similar needs?
- What would be the disadvantages of your child being educated in a room with only students with similar needs?

Methods to Gather Info

Information will be gathered through the following means:

- 1) Survey of Teachers
- 2) Survey of parents
- 3) Survey of other ESD's
- 4) Research

Connection to Research:

- Algozzine, B, Morsing, C., and Algozzine, K. (1988). What's Happening in Self-Contained Special Education Classrooms?
- Brown, F. and Lehr, D.H. (1989). Persons with Profound Disabilities, Issues and Practices, (213-239). Paul H. Brookes Publishing.
- Hanselman, E. Guidance on Special Education, State of Illinois Department of Education. (2010).

Timeline:

January 2011 – Management preliminary Discussion on classroom composition

February 2011 – Gather information from Other ESD's

March 2011 – Survey's:
A - Parents
B – Teachers

April 2011 – Make Decision

Some Results and Conclusions

The major discussion points include:

A. The pros to homogeneous grouping:

- 1.If students are grouped in a homogeneous manner
 - a. Increased program efficiency
 - 1) less drive time for consultants
 - 2) teachers would have specialized training
 - 3) increased safety – students with medical issues would educated with students with behavior issues

B. The Cons to homogeneous grouping:

1. If students are grouped in homogeneous manner
 - a. Some students would not have opportunity to be educated with verbal students
 - b. Could lead to teacher burnout (i.e., what teacher would teach the room with all behavior students)

C. The pros to heterogeneous grouping

1. If students are grouped in a heterogeneous manner
 - a. students have opportunity to infer learning from other students

D. The cons to heterogeneous grouping

1. If students are grouped in a heterogeneous manner
 - a. Teachers and consultants must have the ability to to program for wide variety of students.

Results From ESD's across the state

A. Currently Heterogeneous rooms:

1. Lane ESD
2. Willamette ESD
3. Clackamas

* all 3 looking to create rooms for behavior students and students with OI

B. Currently Heterogeneous but have Beh. and OI rooms:

1. High Dessert ESD
2. Multnomah ESD
3. Douglass County ESD

Budget Impact:

Creating classrooms that are homogeneous: would increase efficiency saving the ESD money. Increased efficiency includes:
1) Less travel time for consultants
2) Less professional development for staff
3) Less safety issues