



**A Clinical and Education
Services Analysis
for the
The Grand Rapids Public Schools:
Executive Summary for Non-Center
Based Programs**



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The leadership of the Grand Rapids Public Schools commissioned this comprehensive review of specific components of its special education delivery system. This analysis employed proprietary methodology from a pre-established paradigm (i.e., a Clinical and Educational Services Analysis), which triangulates information gleaned from qualitative and quantitative information with pre-established benchmarks relating to school-based practices to achieve this broad operational objective. This executive summary serves to encapsulate the primary findings pertaining to the non-center based programs in the District.

More specifically, the qualitative analyses comprised: (1) a series of interviews with related service providers, educators, paraprofessionals, and administrators; (2) a review of documents (i.e., IEPs, Functional Behavioral Assessments, and behavior plans) to ascertain the effectiveness of educational-therapeutic interventions; (3) an understanding of the methods in which special education services are delivered to students in reference to best practices, student outcomes, and Least Restrictive Environment; and (4) site visits to selected programs. Quantitative analyses included: (1) a multidimensional descriptive statistical analyses of the District's instructional, related services, and support personnel in reference to staffing configurations, workloads, service delivery models, and programmatic trends; and (2) a financial review relating to the historical and current costs associated with the provision of special education services including transportation.

Results of this analysis are considered with respect to the aforementioned areas and revealed the following areas of strength: (1) an emerging culture of ownership where both general and special education staff are recognizing the need to collaborate in order provide quality educational-therapeutic supports for its students in keeping with a least restrictive environment; (2) access to a variety of professional development opportunities through KISD offerings and resources; (3) an emerging CST model in order to support students with the related services providers' expertise that need not be through an IEP (that is, special education); (4) an understanding of the educational model by related services providers with concomitant general uniformity of exit and entrance determinations; (6) an administration that is considered to be effective and efficient in disseminating information, adjusting finances to District needs, and in allowing the District to ensure compliance with federal and state timelines; and (7) innovative instructional and programmatic initiatives (e.g., MiBLSi) throughout the District.

Primary areas of programmatic challenges, which include corresponding recommendations to address these areas, are: (1) parents that are frequently disengaged from the IEP process; (2) lack of consistency and uniformity across the District with respect to policies, procedures, and culture surrounding special education including methods to address students; (3) professional development for NCS that are specific to the needs of the students whom they serve; (4) inconsistent Rtl, blended instruction, and co-teaching practices that are more dependent on the talents of personnel than systematic school- and District processes and oversight; (5) variability in the quality of IEPs; and (6) an opportunity to be more efficient with social work, contracted psychology services, related services vis-à-vis the use of assistants, and transportation.