



AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH

**Study to Measure the Delivery of Services in Accordance
with the Individualized Education Programs of Students with
Disabilities in the Los Angeles Unified School District**

Final Report

May 18, 2004

Revised June 1, 2004

Submitted to:

Office of the Independent Monitor
Los Angeles Unified School District

Submitted by:

American Institutes for Research
Jenifer J. Harr
Miguel Socias
Tom Parrish
Cheryl Graczewski

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	iv
Overview	iv
Summary of Findings.....	v
Conclusion	viii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Purpose of Study	1
Background Information.....	1
Description of Study	2
Confidentiality	4
Study Approach	5
Project Timeline.....	5
Project Deliverables.....	6
Overview of the Report.....	6
Chapter 2: Methodology.....	7
Sampling	7
IEP and Provider Log Data Collection and Data Entry	12
Site Visit Data Collection	15
Site Visits: Methodological Constraints	18
Chapter 3: Data Analysis	22
Overview.....	22
Data Analysis Issues	22
The Sample	22
IEP – SESAC Discrepancies.....	26
IEP – Provider Log Discrepancies.....	27
Site Visit Analyses.....	35
Overall Population Estimate	41
Other Analyses: ITP, TSA, ATD, and Transportation.....	43
Chapter 4: Summary of Findings and Recommendations.....	47
Summary of Findings by Type of Service	49
Summary of Findings by Disability Category and Confidence Levels	53
Policy Implications of Confidence Levels.....	56
Recommendations for District Data Maintenance.....	57
Issues with Service Delivery.....	57
References.....	59

List of Tables

Table 1:	IEP-Log and IEP-Site Visit Service Analyses, by Disability Category	v
Table 2:	IEP-Log and IEP-Site Visit Service Analyses, by Service.....	vi
Table 3:	IEP-Log Frequency and Duration Analyses	viii
Table 2.1:	Mapping Eligibility – Disability Category	8
Table 2.2:	Service Categories Groupings	9
Table 2.3:	Distribution of Disabilities in the Overall Population and First-Stage Sample	10
Table 2.4:	Distribution of Students by School Level in the Overall Population and First- Stage Sample	10
Table 2.5:	Distribution of Students by District in the Overall Population and First-Stage Sample	10
Table 2.6:	Distribution of Services in the Overall Population and First-Stage Sample ..	11
Table 2.7:	Second-Stage Sample, by Disability.....	12
Table 2.8:	Second-Stage Sample, by Service	12
Table 3.1:	Samples Sizes for Discrepancy Analyses	24
Table 3.2:	Disability Category Distribution of the Sample of 2,509 Students	25
Table 3.3:	IEP Service Distribution of the Sample of 2,509 students	25
Table 3.4:	IEP – SESAC Discrepancy Analysis: Number and Percentages of Services With and Without Discrepancies, by Service	26
Table 3.5:	IEP – SESAC Discrepancy Analysis: Number and Percentages of Services With and Without Discrepancies, by Disability	27
Table 3.6:	Relevant Sample of IEP – Service Log Discrepancy	27
Table 3.7:	IEP – Service Log Discrepancy Analysis: Number and Percentages of Services Provided and Those with No Evidence of Provision, by Service ...	28
Table 3.8:	IEP – Service Log Discrepancy Analysis: Number and Percentages of Services Provided and Those with No Evidence of Provision, by Disability.....	29
Table 3.9:	IEP – Service Log Discrepancy Analysis: Number and Percentages of Services Provided and Those with No Evidence of Provision, by School Type	29
Table 3.10:	Number and Percentages of Nursing Services Provided and Those with No Evidence of Service Provision, by Disability	30
Table 3.11:	Monthly Service Frequency, All Logs, Number and Percentages of Services With and Without Discrepancies, by Service	32
Table 3.12:	Monthly Service Frequency, All Logs, Number and Percentages of Services With and Without Discrepancies, by Disability	33
Table 3.13:	Monthly Service Time, All Logs, Number and Percentages of Services With and Without Discrepancies, by Service	34
Table 3.14:	Monthly Service Time, All Logs, Number and Percentages of Services With and Without Discrepancies, by Disability	34
Table 3.15:	Number and Percentages of Completed Observations by Service	35
Table 3.16:	Numbers and Percentages of Completed Observations by Disability Category.....	36

Table 3.17: Number and Percentage of Observations by Session Status	37
Table 3.18: IEP-Site Visit Observations: Session Status of Service Observations by Service (Counts)	38
Table 3.19: IEP-Site Visit Observations: Session Status of Services Observations by Service (Percentages).....	38
Table 3.20: IEP-Site Visit Observations: Session Status of Service Observations by Disability (Counts)	38
Table 3.20: IEP-Site Visit Observations: Session Status of Service Observations by Disability (Counts).....	39
Table 3.21: IEP-Site Visit Observations: Session Status of Service Observations by Disability (Percentages).....	39
Table 3.22: IEP-Site Visit Agreement by Service: Session Duration Provided and Not Provided According to IEP	40
Table 3.23: IEP-Site Visit Agreement by Disability: Session Duration Provided and Not Provided According to IEP	41
Table 3.24: Probability and Weights of First-Stage Sample.....	42
Table 3.25: Overall Population Estimate and Alternative Approaches	42
Table 3.26: Special Education Students With and Without Individual Transition Plans (ITP).....	43
Table 3.27: Students Ages 14 Years and Older With and Without Individual Transition Plans (ITP), by Disability Category.....	44
Table 3.28: Students Whose IEP Required TSA Services.....	44
Table 3.29: Students Whose IEP Required TSA and Did/Did Not Receive the Service, by Disability Category	45
Table 3.30: Students Whose IEP Required ATD Services and Who Did/Did Not Receive an AT Evaluation	45
Table 3.31: Students Whose IEP Required Special Transportation	46
Table 3.32: Students Whose IEP Required Special Transportation and Did/Did Not Receive Service, by Disability Category	46
Table 4.1: Summary of Service Analyses by Service and Confidence Levels.....	51
Table 4.2: Summary of Service Analyses by Disability Category and Confidence Levels.....	55

Executive Summary

Overview

The purpose of this study is to measure the delivery of special education services in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD or the “District”) in accordance with students’ Individualized Education Programs (IEP) during the 2003-04 school year. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that all eligible students with disabilities have an IEP, which specifies special education services¹ that a student needs to progress towards instructional goals. Students in special education may receive a broad array of services according to their IEPs. For most services, the IEP specifies the frequency and duration with which the service is to be provided. This study develops indicators of the extent to which each of these required services is actually being provided to students with disabilities throughout the District in accordance with their IEPs. The results will be used to develop a performance outcome in the area of service delivery for LAUSD as required by the Modified Consent Decree, a class action settlement requiring improvements in a number of aspects of the District’s special education system.

Questions answered by this study include:

- How accurately does the District special education database (Special Education Student Assignment Center) capture information on student services in their IEPs?
- Are students receiving services specified in their IEPs?
- Are students receiving the services with the frequency (e.g., twice a week) and duration (e.g., 30 minutes per week) specified in the IEP?

To address these questions, the American Institutes for Research (AIR), working with the Office of the Independent Monitor (OIM) and the Program Evaluation and Research Branch (PERB) of LAUSD, and with the cooperation and assistance of the Division of Special Education and thousands of service providers, teachers, and administrators in hundreds of schools, conducted two comprehensive data collections. First, the OIM collected the IEPs of special education students based on a sample of 3,800 students, as well as thousands of corresponding service provider logs used to track the delivery of services. These were delivered to AIR for data entry and tracking. Second, AIR drew a sub-sample of 410 students to conduct programmatic audits through site visitation for the purpose of confirming the delivery of services recorded in the IEPs. The goal of this two-stage analysis was to develop a baseline population estimate of service delivery for students with disabilities in LAUSD during the 2003-04 school year. A complementary

¹ Please refer to U.S. Department of Education (1999), Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Sections 300.24 and 300.6, for descriptions of related services and assistive technology services to be made available to eligible students with disabilities.

goal was to develop baseline estimates of service delivery by service type and disability category.

Summary of Findings

As noted, as one component of this analysis, AIR compared the provider service logs used to track the delivery of services to the information on services in the students’ IEPs. The table below summarizes findings on the degree of agreement between information on the students’ IEPs and information on service provider logs by category of disability (Columns A and B).² It also presents data regarding the degree of agreement between the service information found on IEPs as compared to service provision as observed on site (Columns C and D). The bottom row of this table shows the district-wide population estimates derived from these samples.

Table 1: IEP-Log and IEP-Site Visit Service Analyses, by Disability Category

Disability Category	A	B	C	D
	IEP-Log Service Agreement		IEP-Site Visits Service Agreement	
	% of services for which there was evidence of service provision	No. of Service Obs	% of observed services provided	No. of Service Obs
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	77.4%	474	73.5%	34
Multiple Disability/Deaf-Blind	75.4%	549	90.7%	43
Mental Retardation	69.6%	401	92.8%	28
Autism	68.1%	514	78.2%	32
Speech and Language Impairment	65.8%	313	81.3%	32
Visual Impairment	65.8%	439	75.5%	45
Orthopedic Impairment/Traum. Brain Injury	60.6%	700	73.9%	46
Other Health Impairment	55.0%	387	81.8%	33
Emotional Disturbance	39.3%	308	80.0%	20
Specific Learning Disability	33.8%	231	92.6%	27
Overall Population Estimate	42.7% <1>	4,316	89.0% <2>	340

<1> The 95 percent confidence interval for the population estimate using the IEP-log service agreement rates is 37.0 to 48.4 percent.

<2> The 95 percent confidence interval for the population estimate using the IEP-site visit service agreement rates is 78.0 to 98.3 percent.

- Converting these findings to a district-wide population estimate, the percentage of services for which there is evidence of service provision is 42.7 percent. This means that available data provide no evidence of service provision for a majority of students with disabilities in LAUSD (Col. A).

² For the purpose of these analyses, the 21 disability and 22 service categories in the SESAC database were consolidated into 10 and 12 categories, respectively. The primary rationale for this consolidation was to minimize the number of low incidence categories containing small numbers of students, thereby allowing for meaningful analyses.

- By category of disability, the rate of service agreement ranges from a high of 77.4 percent for Deaf and Hard of Hearing to a low of 33.8 percent for students with Specific Learning Disability (SLD, Col. A).
- The extent to which the population estimate of 42.7 percent is driven by the SLD data is worthy of note. Excluding SLD, the population estimate of IEP to log service agreement is 63.7 percent.
- The lower number of observations in the site visits (Col. D), and the fact that not all services are well suited to observational monitoring, prevent site visit data from being generalized to the overall population with confidence. However, the overall rate of agreement between IEPs and services provided appears much higher (89.0 percent, Col. C).
- The site visitation data also help in interpreting the high degree of discrepancy between IEP and provider logs. For example, for the most predominant category of special education students, those with Specific Learning Disability (SLD), the rate of log agreement (33.8 percent) is much lower than what appears in regard to actual service provision (92.6 percent).
- A comparison of these two findings suggests that much of the low IEP to service log agreement observed for this category of students (33.8 percent) is more likely attributable to poor quality logs than gaps in service.

Table 2 summarizes agreement by type of service. Columns A and B present the agreement rates between service logs and IEPs. Columns C and D present rates of agreement between observational data derived from site visits and IEPs.

Table 2: IEP-Log and IEP-Site Visit Service Analyses, by Service

Service Category	A B		C D	
	IEP-Log Service Agreement		IEP-Site Visits Service Agreement	
	% of services for which there was evidence of service provision	No. of Service Obs	% of observed services provided	No. of Service Obs
Deaf and Hard of Hearing	82.7%	342	72.7%	33
Occupational Therapy	77.0%	382	81.1%	37
Language and Speech	75.5%	1,034	82.2%	67
Visual Impairment Services	74.2%	252	80.6%	36
Adaptive PE	68.9%	1,053	86.5%	59
Physical Therapy	62.0%	137	77.2%	22
Non-Public Agency Services	55.0%	40	n/a	
LRE Services	50.0%	214	63.2%	19
Mental Health Services	41.0%	332	76.3%	21
RSP	22.6%	530	93.6%	46
Total		4,316		340

- Similar to Table 1, a large range of variation is found, with the IEP to log agreement being the lowest for RSP services (22.6 percent) and highest for Deaf and Hard of Hearing services (82.7 percent, Col. A).
- The site visitation sample is much smaller than the IEP to log analysis, and therefore less confidence can be placed in the results. However, a comparison of these two rates provides insight into the rates of agreement observed in Column A. For example, for RSP, the logs (22.6 percent) are much less likely to agree with what is shown in the IEP than the observed provision of service (93.6 percent agreement). For Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the opposite seems true, i.e. the service logs are more likely to reflect the IEP requirements (82.7 percent) than what is actually observed on site (72.7 percent agreement), possibly suggesting that in this case the tracking data may be somewhat overstating what is actually being provided.
- A lower level of statistical confidence is associated with Non-Public Agency (NPA) services due to the much lower number of cases in the IEP to service log analyses.

Table 3 summarizes the data in regard to the frequency of service (Col. A) and duration of service (Col. C). Both analyses are based on the IEP to service log analyses. The frequency analysis is based on agreement regarding the rate at which a service should be provided. For example, if two sessions per week of speech therapy are specified in the IEP, are they provided at least at this level of frequency? The duration analysis refers to agreement between the length of time specified for each instance of service, as specified in the IEP, and what is recorded in the service log. For example, if 60 minutes of OT service is required every week, does the service log provide clear evidence that OT services were provided for at least this length of time?

- For both the frequency and duration analysis, the number of observations is sometimes too low to allow district-wide generalization (the general cut-off in this regard is cases with fewer than thirty observations).

Table 3: IEP-Log Frequency and Duration Analyses

Service Category	A		B		C		D	
	IEP-Log Frequency Agreement		IEP-Log Duration Agreement					
	% of services with monthly frequency at least equal to the IEP	No. of Service Obs	% of services with monthly duration at least equal to the IEP	No. of Service Obs				
Non-Public Agency Services	86.4%	22	100.0%	22				
Adaptive PE	75.9%	648	69.0%	630				
RSP	71.0%	31	74.2%	31				
School Mental Health Services	59.6%	104	71.8%	103				
Deaf and Hard of Hearing	53.0%	200	62.2%	90				
Language and Speech	48.1%	680	52.8%	659				
Visual Impairment Services	48.1%	156	60.0%	20				
Physical Therapy	46.2%	65	52.7%	55				
Occupational Therapy	43.7%	254	59.4%	239				
LRE Services	35.0%	40	44.4%	27				
Total		2,200		1,876				

Conclusion

As noted above, we believe the best overall estimate of special education service provision in LAUSD is that evidence of provision through service logs was found for 42.7 percent of all services specified in students' IEPs. It is not possible to say to what extent this relatively low rate of service agreement is the result of poor evidence (i.e. inadequately maintained or missing logs) or the failure to deliver services. However, comparing these findings to the site visit data suggests that for most services the more predominant problem is tracking. Still, it is unlikely that the rate of service delivery presented in the site visit results represents the true rate of service delivery since not all services are well suited for observational monitoring. The true rate of service delivery will likely lie between the results of the log analysis and the site visit data analysis.

While the site visit data may seem to mitigate the high rate of discrepancy between what is required by IEPs and what is shown in the logs, it should be noted that maintaining accurate records of service is also important. To the extent that service logs can be standardized, less reliance will be placed on the time-intensive and difficult practice of direct service observation.

In regard to outcome indicators, the most likely benchmark measures will come from IEP-log agreement. These analyses have sufficient data to provide the power needed for district-wide comparisons over time.

In conclusion, the overall gaps in service provision may not be as great as that indicated by the relatively low IEP to service log agreement rate of 42.7 percent. In this sense, the baseline estimates of compliance provided in this report are probably conservative. From a recording perspective, however, there is little evidence to suggest that the overall rate of

agreement is not as problematic as reported. As such, the overall IEP-service log agreement estimate provided in this report (42.7 percent), as well as the more detailed estimates by category of disability and by type of service, appear to be reasonable baseline estimates.