

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 181 691

EC 122 854

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 TITLE A New Era for Special Education: California's Master Plan in Action.
 INSTITUTION California State Dept. of Education, Sacramento. Div. of Special Education.
 PUB DATE 79
 NOTE 37p.
 AVAILABLE FROM Publication Sales, California State Department of Education, P.O. Box 271, Sacramento, CA 95802 (\$2.00 plus 6% sales tax for California residents)
 EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
 DESCRIPTORS Educational Finance; *Equal Education; Federal Legislation; *Handicapped Children; Identification; Individualized Programs; Inservice Education; Parent Influence; Parent Participation; *Program Descriptions; Program Development; *Program Evaluation; *State Legislation; Student Rights; Volunteers
 IDENTIFIERS *California Master Plan for Special Education

ABSTRACT

The report discusses the California State Department of Education's California Master Plan for Special Education, a comprehensive approach to provide special education services to handicapped children. The plan establishes a system that identifies children in need of special education, places children in the programs best suited to their needs, evaluates each child's progress periodically, moves key educational decisions from the state to the local level, and provides parents with opportunities to influence decisions about their child's education. The Master Plan's development is reviewed, and its goals are considered. Other aspects examined include student placement, resource specialist programs, parent and student rights, funding, evaluation requirements, community advisory committees, and staff training. Six Responsible Local Agencies (agents responsible for coordination of the Master Plan) are described in terms of such facets as identification, volunteers, inservice training, advisory committees, and parent recruitment. Some problems arising from the Master Plan are discussed, along with its positive impact on teachers, handicapped and normal students, parents, and society in general. An appendix discusses federal law regarding the education of the handicapped. (DLS)

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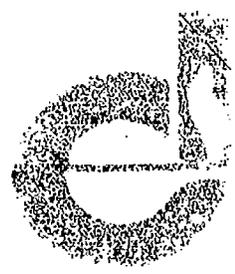
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A New Era

Special Education

ED181691



Wilson Files State Superintendent of Public Instruction
Sacramento, 1979

Credits

A New Era for Special Education: California's Master Plan in Action was written by Peggy Gonder in cooperation with the staff of the California State Department of Education's Office of Special Education. Editorial direction was provided by Gordon Duck, assistant state superintendent, Office of Special Education, and George Neill, assistant state superintendent, Office of Information, California State Department of Education. Special assistance was provided by Barry Griffing, associate state superintendent for special programs and support services. The report was initially developed with funds allocated to the California State Department of Education under the Education for All Handicapped Children Act.

This document was published by the California State Department of Education, 721 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, CA 95814.

Printed by the Office of State Printing and distributed under the provisions of the Library Distribution Act.

1979

Copies of this publication are available for \$2.00 per copy, plus 6 percent sales tax for California residents (6½ percent for Bay Area Counties), from:

Publications Sales
California State Department of Education
P.O. Box 271
Sacramento, CA 95802

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Foreword

Ideas even good ideas are not uncommon. However, good ideas that can be made to work are rare.

The California Master Plan for Special Education is a remarkable idea that all children, no matter what their needs or abilities, have an equal right to the best possible education.

But what is truly extraordinary is that this powerful idea is being made to work in California.

The plan did not start working by itself. A great number of people—special education teachers, regular classroom teachers, principals, superintendents, school board members, volunteers, parents and their children—are cooperating to make it work.

I have called the Master Plan a virtual Magna Carta for handicapped children. Some people may think this sounds like hyperbole, but it is no exaggeration to say that the plan represents an entirely new way of looking at handicapped children—a way that opens new vistas of hope to so many who had no hope before.

At long last, new laws extend the same basic rights to handicapped children that other children have enjoyed for at least 50 years. State law is based on California's Master Plan as adopted by the State Board of Education. Federal law is based on the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142).

Under provisions of both state and federal laws, each handicapped child in California will be assessed to determine strengths and weaknesses. If the child's needs, as determined by the assessment, cannot be met by the local district, the child can be referred to a state special school or to a private nonsectarian school. In either case, the child's tuition, transportation, and room and board can be paid with public funds.

California's drive to individualize education is strengthened by a requirement—both state and federal—that each handicapped child be given an education plan tailored to the child's individual needs. The plan is determined by a team composed of the student's special and regular teachers, a special education administrator, the parents and, when appropriate, the student.

The Master Plan sets goals for the student and specifies the education programs that will help the student meet those goals. Both state and federal laws prohibit placement based on tests that are culturally or racially based.

Both state and federal laws also require that each child be educated in the "least restrictive environment" appropriate for the child's needs. For the moderately handicapped child, the "least restrictive environment" may be a regular public school class with additional services from a specialist or teacher's aide. Other

handicapped children may be served best in a special class, in which case added opportunities, such as field trips and recess, make it possible for handicapped and nonhandicapped children to know and understand each other. Handicapped persons with special needs that cannot be met by the local school district or county superintendent will continue to be educated in state schools or private nonsectarian schools.

Efforts to educate handicapped children "in the mainstream" are getting additional impetus from a second federal law that extends civil rights to all handicapped persons. Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 require schools and medical and social agencies to make their programs accessible to handicapped persons and to promote employment of qualified handicapped persons. The purpose is to end segregation of the handicapped and to provide them with the same educational, social and vocational opportunities available to other children.

The amendments declare that any schools built after June 3, 1977, must be barrier free. In addition, programs in existing buildings must be made accessible through changes in room assignments, the use of aides or other modifications. Major structural changes will be required only as a last resort.

The California Master Plan for Special Education replaces such stigmatizing labels as "mentally retarded" and "emotionally disturbed" with an umbrella term, "individuals with exceptional needs." Under previous law, schools were required to label children in order to receive special education funds. The new state law allocates money based on the educational services each child receives rather than on the child's handicap or categorical label.

Another breakthrough provided by both state and federal laws gives parents significant new rights. For example, parents must give written consent before their child is assessed, and they have the right to obtain and read copies of their child's school records. If they disagree with placement decisions, parents are given the right to appeal. In addition, both laws *require* school districts to formally notify parents of their rights.

These are highlights of the new era now under way in special education. This report explains in detail what is happening and why.



WILSON RILES
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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Overview

The move from a small private school to a large public elementary school is a big step for any child. But for an 11-year-old child with minimal brain damage, it can be especially traumatic. It wasn't for Tommy, though. In fact, according to his mother, it was the best thing that ever happened to him.

Within four days of his enrollment at Webster Elementary School in Santa Monica, there was a radical, positive change in Tommy's behavior. "He walked taller, sat straighter, he looked more normal," she said. "Suddenly he cared whether his hair was combed and whether he was dressed like the other children in school."

This was dramatically demonstrated during a visit to a department store. "I had always had to select all his clothes for him," she said. They walked into the store, and Tommy, spotting brightly colored T-shirts like the other boys wore, ran and began pulling the shirts off the shelf.

The move to a public school did not "cure" Tommy of his disability. He still attended a special class, but he mixed with other students on the bus, at recess and in the cafeteria. His self-confidence took a giant leap because he was now attending the same school as his brothers and his neighbors. "His brothers began to focus on his sameness rather than his differentness," she said. "Now the focus was on Tommy's abilities rather than his disabilities."

The change was both external and internal. Tommy's friends and family began to view him differently, and Tommy, buoyed by his accomplishments in school, began to feel better about himself.

Tommy's experience is one of many success stories that are happening in schools operating under the California Master Plan for Special Education. A new state law, Assembly Bill 1250 (1977), as amended by AB 3635

(1978), extends the Master Plan to every school in the state. At the same time, a far-reaching federal law, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, is being implemented. Together, these laws give exceptional children unprecedented new rights and opportunities that will affect education for years to come.

The federal law, which became effective Oct. 1, 1977, guarantees each child a "free and appropriate education," regardless of handicap. This seemingly innocent phrase will revolutionize education by extending the same rights to handicapped children that other children have enjoyed for more than 50 years. Under both state and federal law, each handicapped child will be assessed by the local school district. If the child's needs cannot be met by the local school, the child can be referred to a state school or private nonsectarian school. In either case, the child's tuition, educational expenses and transportation will be paid for with public funds.

The state and federal laws also require that each child be educated in the "least restrictive educational environment" appropriate to the child's needs. For the moderately handicapped child, the least restrictive educational environment may be a regular public school class with additional services from a specialist or teacher's aide. Other children may best be served in a special class, with opportunities, such as field trips and recess, provided to encourage handicapped and nonhandicapped children to know and understand each other. For the most severely handicapped children, the least restrictive environment most appropriate for the child's needs may well be a private or state school or a special school within the public sector that provides little contact with nonhandicapped children.

The effort to educate more handicapped children in the regular school programs is reinforced by a second federal law that extends civil rights to all handicapped persons. That law, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, prohibits job discrimination against handicapped persons and requires schools and medical and social agencies to make their programs accessible to the handicapped. The purpose is to end segregation of the handicapped and to provide them with the same educational opportunities that are available to other children.

The Rehabilitation Act requires that all schools built after June 1977 must be barrier free. In California this has been a requirement since 1973. Programs in existing buildings must be made accessible through changes in room assignments, the use of aides or other modifications. Major structural changes are required only when programs cannot be made accessible any other way.

Another change frees handicapped children from the stigma of labels. New state laws replace such labels as "mentally retarded" and "emotionally disturbed" with the umbrella phrase, "individuals with exceptional needs." Under earlier state laws schools had to label children before they could receive special education funds. The new law allocates money based on the educational services each child receives rather than on the child's handicap.

California's drive to individualize education is strengthened by a requirement in the state and federal laws that each handicapped child be given an educational plan tailored to the child's individual needs. The plan is designed by a team composed of the student's special and regular teachers, a special education administrator, the parents and, when appropriate, the student. The plan sets objectives for the student and specifies the educational programs that will help meet those objectives. Both state and federal laws require that placement decisions be based on tests that are culturally and racially fair.

The state and federal laws also give parents significant new rights. Parents must give written consent before their child may be assessed. They also have the right to read and make copies of their child's school records. If they disagree with the placement decision, parents can appeal the decision. Both laws also require districts to formally notify parents of their rights.

Educating the handicapped under the new laws will

cost more than before, partly because more children will be served and partly because specialized programs are more expensive than regular ones. Accordingly, California and the federal government have appropriated large increases in funding for special education to meet increased costs.

Congress and the President increased the nation's 1979 special education budget to \$977 million, an increase of \$354 million over fiscal year 1978.

The California Legislature appropriated \$300 million for 1978, and plans to invest \$686 million annually in special education by 1982.

Parts of both the state and federal laws will be phased in over several years. The main provisions of the federal law were implemented by Oct. 1, 1977, for children presently in schools.

Under Assembly Bill 1250, as amended by AB 3635, a phase-in plan has been developed by the State Department of Education to extend the Master Plan statewide by the 1981-82 school year. Under the Master Plan, schools *may* serve children under three years old. They *must* serve the following handicapped individuals:

- All handicapped persons kindergarten-to-graduation from high school.
- All 19- to 21-year-olds who qualify for special education and who have not finished school.
- Those 3- to 4-year-olds who require intensive special education services.

The new rights granted to handicapped persons will have a profound impact on education. They will affect the structure of new school buildings, the way children are tested and, more importantly, the way children are educated.

Although the changes will be implemented fairly rapidly, the new rights were not won overnight. The momentum for change began years ago, and was encouraged by farsighted educational leaders and parents, lawsuits, the civil rights movement and changes in educational philosophy. The turning point in California came in 1974 when the State Board of Education adopted the Master Plan for Special Education. The completed plan represents years of study and includes suggestions and comments from more than 2,000 Californians.

Chapter I



The Master Plan: What Is It?

The California Master Plan for Special Education is a comprehensive approach to provide special education services.* It establishes a system that:

- Identifies children in need of special education.
- Places children in the programs best suited to their needs.
- Evaluates each child's progress periodically.
- Moves key educational decisions from the state to the local level.
- Provides parents with opportunities to influence decisions about their child's education.

The system was not imposed arbitrarily upon unwilling educators. It grew, instead, out of a need to close gaps and correct inequities caused by the state's old method of providing special education.

Why a Master Plan?

California began serving exceptional children in 1860 when the School for the Deaf and Dumb and Blind was established in San Francisco. During the past 119 years, other special education services were added piecemeal as science and education learned more about each handicap. Since the programs were added in different

years, some received more money than others because the newer programs were funded according to a higher cost of living. By 1970, the state's effort to educate handicapped children represented a patchwork of 28 categorical programs, each with different maximum class sizes and conflicting placement procedures. The system was not only difficult to administer, it also created competition among special education interest groups who argued the merits of their programs separately before the California Legislature.

The programs separated children by handicap and excluded children with unusual needs. A child who was blind, mentally retarded and emotionally disturbed was not welcome in any of the programs that served only one of those needs. Also, some of the programs were created with ceilings on enrollment. As a result, they excluded qualified children and young people if the district's quota happened to be filled. The separate programs also created problems for the local school administrator. In addition to the myriad of special education programs, local schools were faced with administering numerous other categorical programs, such as bilingual education, compensatory education and early childhood education.

Lawsuits Set Precedents

Several lawsuits established legal precedents for the rights of handicapped children. In October 1971, for

*NOTE: Technical changes in the Master Plan are inevitable as the program develops. Information on these changes is available from the State Department of Education's Office of Special Education, 721 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, CA 95814; phone (916) 445-4036.

example, the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children sued the State of Pennsylvania for its "permissive" programs for the retarded. A permissive law permitted, but did not require, a school district to offer a program. The association won its case, establishing that retarded children have the legal right to a free public education. The state was given 90 days to identify every retarded child not receiving education and training at that time.

The lawsuits added momentum to the efforts of educational leaders and parent groups who were lobbying for better services for their handicapped children. These developments, coupled with the problems of administering and financing so many categorical programs, led to a broad consensus that a new, comprehensive approach to educating the handicapped was needed.

A Cooperative Venture

The California State Department of Education first began looking at the problem in 1970. By 1971, the development of a comprehensive plan for special education had become a priority of the State Board of Education. The Department staff developed questions that were answered at 12 regional meetings by parents, teachers, school administrators, agency representatives and handicapped persons. Other interested persons also were given an opportunity to comment.

Public suggestions were received through hearings sponsored by the Council for Exceptional Children and the State Commission on Special Education. Twenty drafts later, on Jan. 10, 1974, the Master Plan was adopted by the State Board of Education.

Goals of the Master Plan

The basic premise of both the Master Plan and the federal law is that each child is entitled to an equal opportunity for education. Although few have argued with this noble goal, in practice many children have not had equal educational opportunities. The U.S. Office of Education (USOE) estimates that about half of the nearly 8 million handicapped children in the United States between ages 3 and 21 are receiving less than an adequate education. Nearly 1 million are receiving no education at all. In California, children in many schools are on waiting lists for special education because of insufficient funds to accommodate all children who qualify.

To correct this inequity, four goals were adopted in the Master Plan.

- Public education in California must seek out individuals with exceptional needs and provide them an education appropriate to their needs.
- Public education must work cooperatively with other public and private agencies to assure appropriate education for individuals with exceptional needs from the time of their identification.

- Public education must offer special assistance to exceptional individuals in a setting which promotes maximum interaction with the general school population and which is appropriate to the needs of both.
- The most important goal of special education is to provide individually tailored programs which reduce or eliminate the handicapping effects of disabilities on exceptional children.

Goal I: Finding Those Who Need Help

The first goal, seeking out individuals, is being accomplished in two ways:

- Through a statewide public awareness program, known as Search and Serve.
- Through the training of regular teachers to spot learning handicaps in the classroom.

Search and Serve is an effort to identify all children from birth through age 21 who are handicapped. The goal is to reach all handicapped children, including those already being served, to ensure that each handicapped child is receiving the most appropriate kind of help. Search and Serve enlists the aid of physicians, the media (press, radio and television), service and youth organizations, state and local agencies, school districts, parents and citizens in an effort to locate these children. The census started operating in seven pilot areas in California in mid-1976 and was expanded statewide in October 1977.

Goal II: Public and Private Cooperation

The second goal, establishing cooperative relationships with public and private agencies, ensures that all avenues of support are available to help a handicapped child. The State of California operates seven regional centers and six state schools that provide diagnostic services or residential treatment to children with severe handicaps. These are supplemented by other specialized services from the Department of Health, the Department of Rehabilitation and California Youth Authority. In some instances, private schools may be able to provide services more efficiently than a local school.

Goal III: Maximum Interaction

The third goal, that of providing "maximum interaction with the general school population," does not mean that all handicapped children will be returned to regular classrooms. The statement "maximum interaction" is defined as the amount of integration that is "appropriate to the needs of both" handicapped and general schoolchildren. The most appropriate setting for a severely emotionally disturbed child may be a self-contained school that provides minimum interaction with regular schoolchildren. A child with a moderate emotional problem, however, may be able to function well in an integrated class at a public school. This child

would probably have contact with regular children on the playground, in the bus and in the cafeteria.

Goal IV: Individualized Education

The fourth goal is to provide an individualized education program for each handicapped child. When a child is identified as having special needs, he or she is referred to a school appraisal team which cooperatively selects the combination of services that best meets the child's needs. The team consists of teachers, special education professionals, the school principal or another administrator and the parents.

Just as a doctor writes a prescription to help remedy a physical ailment, the team writes a prescriptive educational plan to help solve the child's difficulties at school. Emphasis at all times is on designing a program to fit the individual child's needs. This is a big change from the traditional approach in which programs were first designed and then children were assigned to a predetermined program and available slots.

Removing Labels

The Master Plan eliminates the need to brand children with labels such as "educable mentally retarded" or "severely emotionally disturbed." Instead, pupils with special education needs are designated as "individuals with exceptional needs." Four broad categories were established primarily for transitional purposes. They are communicatively handicapped, physically handicapped, learning handicapped and severely handicapped.

Old funding formulas required that a child be labeled before the district could receive extra money for educating that child. The new system enables districts to receive funds for each "child with special needs" without burdening each child with a label. In addition to the psychological advantages, this new approach recognizes that a child's educational needs may be different from his or her handicap. A child with a communication handicap, for example, may receive more benefit from a program for the learning handicapped than from a program that is strictly for deaf children.

SESRs and RLAs

The fragmentation of the old system created problems of overlapping responsibilities among the state, county superintendents of schools and local school districts. Such duplications were not only inefficient, they diluted accountability. In addition, a maze of state regulations proliferated along with each of the 28 categorical programs. These inhibited innovations and made demands that were sometimes inappropriate to local situations.

To correct these problems, a new organizational unit, Special Education Services Region (SESR), was created. The SESR can be a single school district, a combination of school districts, several school districts joining with a county superintendent or two or more county

superintendents. Each SESR writes a local *comprehensive plan for special education*, which tailors the requirements of the Master Plan to the needs of the local area. The local comprehensive plan provides greater local control over educational decisions than was available through previous special education programs.

A key part of each local comprehensive plan includes:

- Special classes and centers.
- Designated instruction and services.
- Program specialists.
- Resource specialist programs.
- Nonpublic schools.
- State special schools.

The resource specialist program is a totally new service, while the others are modifications of services already available to California children.

The Responsible Local Agency (RLA) is the district or county superintendent office which is administratively and fiscally responsible for implementation of the comprehensive plan in the SESR.

Special Classes and Centers

Special classes and centers, major ingredients of the Master Plan, offer instruction for most of the school day to children whose needs cannot be met in regular classes. Before the Master Plan, special classes were organized according to handicap, e.g., classes for the blind, mentally retarded and emotionally disturbed and centers for the orthopedically handicapped and deaf.

Under the Master Plan, classes and centers are organized according to educational needs. An elementary special class, for example, might include a small number of children who are easily distractible. Their problems may be due to different causes, such as behavior or neurological disorders, but their educational needs are the same.

Who Is Eligible for Special Ed?

Children from birth through age 21 become eligible for special education services once they are determined to be individuals with exceptional needs. Such children, according to state regulations, exhibit one of the following problems:

- A demonstrated physical, intellectual or serious emotional handicap.
- A specified behavior, learning or language disorder requiring special instruction or services beyond that provided by modification of the regular school program.

This definition excludes children whose problems stem from cultural or language differences. (The federal law allows each state some discretion in its definition of "handicapped.")

The Master Plan also enables each local area, through its comprehensive plan, to determine the number of children in each class; however, the average class size must not exceed 10 children.

Designated Instruction

Another new program created by the Master Plan is called designated instruction and services (DIS). The services, such as speech therapy, are considered "designated" because they are specific and not usually taught in a regular or special class program. The services include teaching skills, such as mobility training for the blind, and performing corrective services, such as counseling and physical therapy. Some of the DIS programs were available before the Master Plan became a reality, but the new system offers a wide range of services.

Children in regular and special classes are eligible for any combination of services that they need.

Program Specialists

If the resource specialist, DIS and special class programs operated independently, the old problems of overlap and duplication might recur.

In order to provide instructional leadership and coordinate services, a new position the program specialist was created to coordinate services and also provide "residential expertise" for the resource specialist, special education teacher, school psychologist or clinical service professional. He or she must have advanced training in at least one of the following broad areas: physically handicapped, learning handicapped, communicatively handicapped, severely handicapped, preschool handicapped or career-vocational development. Program specialists have the following duties:

- Coordinating the curriculum of special day classes.
- Implementing inservice training programs.
- Developing innovative teaching methods.
- Assessing program effectiveness.
- Participating in educational research.

Resource Specialist Programs

The resource specialist program is designed to help children who spend a majority of the day in regular classes. The resource specialist has a variety of responsibilities that total three roles: teacher, consultant and coordinator. The relative importance the specialist attaches to each of these roles is determined by the local comprehensive plan.

Resource specialists also provide a range of coordinator and consultative services. These include:

- Providing diagnostic testing to determine how to help the child learn.
- Developing instructional materials and

demonstrating teaching techniques to the classroom teacher.

- Coordinating all special education services for each child in the school.
- Coordinating recommendations in the child's educational plan with parents and teacher.
- Assessing pupil progress, revising the education plan and referring children who are not making adequate progress for more intensive assessment.

Each resource specialist must have a special education teaching credential and at least three years' successful teaching experience. The teacher must also have advanced training in special education.

Resource specialists who concentrate on instruction are permitted to teach up to 24 students, individually and in small groups. Instruction can be given directly by the resource specialist or by an aide under the specialist's supervision.

Placing Children in Special Programs

Children are placed in special education programs only after parental consent is obtained and a careful assessment procedure has been completed. The end result is an individual educational plan that sets goals and prescribes educational services to help the child meet those goals.

The placement process may include seven major steps.

1. Referral and referral analysis.
2. Parent notification.
3. Information gathering.
4. School Appraisal Team (SAT) and assessment by Educational Assessment Services (EAS).
5. Individualized education program (IEP).
6. Enrollment in special programs.
7. Ongoing evaluation of pupil progress.

Step 1—Referral. Children can be referred by anyone familiar with their needs, including the parent, the teacher, a physician, an agency that has worked with the child or the child himself or herself. The child can be referred to the nearest school, to the school district office or to the county office of education. Search coordinators assure that all referrals are received and properly assigned.

Step 2—Notification of Parents. After the child is referred, the parents are contacted for written permission to assess the child. The parents are told that they have the right to obtain an independent assessment and a right to participate in the development of their child's individual plan. They are also notified about due process hearings, least restrictive educational environment, confidentiality and protections in assessment. The notification must be clearly written in language parents understand—not in educational jargon. If the parents do not speak English, the notification must be in their native language. If the parents are blind or deaf, special provisions must be made so they can participate.

Step 3—The School Gathers Information. Next, school personnel gather information about the child's background and abilities. Several diagnostic tests may be conducted and other general information is compiled in areas that affect the child's performance in school. This information includes:

- A school history: the educational progress, steps taken to assist the child in areas of difficulty and the results of such assistance.
- The relationship of the teacher and classmates to the child.
- Appraisal of cultural or language differences that may affect school performance.
- Health status, including recent hearing and vision tests.
- Assessment of career and vocational aptitudes for each secondary student.

Step 4—School Appraisal Team (SAT) and Educational Assessment Service (EAS). The SAT is a group of persons at the school site who meet with the parents to consider the needs of the child and recommend the combination of services that will help him or her succeed in school. The team also writes the child's

educational plan according to the needs of the child. Certain persons, however, are required to attend all SAT meetings.

Each SAT is chaired by the school principal or an administrator designated by the principal. The meeting is attended by the special education teachers or specialists who can help the child and by the child's parents or a representative sent by the parents. Others who sometimes attend SAT meetings are: the regular teacher or counselor when he or she is given responsibilities in the child's education plan; any specialist, psychologist or nurse who has conducted an assessment that will be discussed at the meeting; the pupil when he or she is capable of benefiting from the discussion; and any other person whose competence is needed due to the nature and extent of the pupil's disability.

The SAT considers the child's strengths and weaknesses and weighs the following placement options:

- Returning the child to the regular classroom with changes in the program (no direct special education services).
- Returning the child to the regular classroom with program changes and with a scheduled review of the child's continuing progress.



Emotionally Disturbed Children Can Be Mainstreamed

The plump, brunette 5th grader worked quietly at her desk and later shared a book with a classmate. To look at Ellen, one would hardly suspect that she had attended a special school for the severely emotionally disturbed. And yet, on this warm June day near the end of Santa Monica's school year, Ellen appeared to be a model student.

It wasn't always this way.

Just one year earlier, Ellen was "easily distracted" and had "about a 10-second attention span," according to those who knew her. She attended a private school for the severely emotionally disturbed and then progressed to a special day class at Roosevelt Elementary School in Santa Monica. By January of 1977, Ellen had "graduated" to a regular fifth-grade class with help from a resource specialist.

"Because of her behavior problems, Ellen was several years behind in math," says Marilyn Hirsch,

the resource specialist. As a result, Ellen's individual education plan called for spending 1½ hours each day in the resource room. The goal was not only to improve Ellen's math skills but to teach her to work independently.

"I don't object to having handicapped children in the classroom," says Sheila Fields, Ellen's fifth-grade teacher. "But I think they need outside help. It can be a strain on children to be in class all day. They need a time out to get more individual attention," she explains.

Ellen now takes turns, raises her hand, contributes to a discussion and takes part in a class play.

This last accomplishment alone is a measure of her progress. One year earlier, Ellen was removed from a summer school play because she could not wait her turn.

- Assigning the child to a regular class for most of the day, supplemented by help from the resource specialist program.
- Assigning the child to a regular class for most of the day with help from DIS.
- Assigning the child to temporary short-term instruction in home or hospital.

If more diagnostic information is needed or if special class placement is indicated, the child is referred to the Educational Assessment Service (EAS).

The Educational Assessment Service (EAS) is a team of specialists that is available to assess children with more intensive needs. Each SESR must have at least one full-time EAS containing specialists representing the fields of health, psychology, social work, speech, language, hearing and special education. In addition to assessing the children, the specialists help to formulate each child's educational plan.

The EAS meeting is chaired by a program specialist or the special education administrator. The meeting is attended by special education teachers or specialists; relevant members of the assessment service; and the parent, parent representative or child advocate. Regular classroom teachers, the child and other qualified persons are expected to attend when they can benefit or add materially to the discussion.

Extensive information is compiled for consideration at the EAS meeting. It may include:

- A description of the child's disability expressed in functional terms.
- An evaluation of the child's behavior, thinking ability and coordination compared to children of similar age and cultural background.
- A history of the child's physical development (at what age he or she started walking, talking, etc.).
- The child's health status, including hearing and vision test.
- An observation of the child's ability to function at home, at school and in a diagnostic class.
- An assessment of career and vocational aptitudes for secondary pupils.

When a health problem exists that affects the child's education, the assessment service obtains a description of the pupil's physical, emotional or neurological problem from a licensed physician or surgeon.

Based on the assessment results and the information gathered, the EAS makes a placement recommendation. All the options available to the SAT are still available (regular class, resource specialist, designated services). In addition, EAS can:

- Recommend placement in a special class or center.
- Recommend placement in a special class with designated instruction and service.
- Refer the child to the state schools for the deaf, blind or neurologically handicapped for more intensive diagnosis or placement in the state school's instructional program.

- Recommend placement in a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency.

Step 5—Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Each child placed in a special education program receives an individualized education program. The program or plan describes the pupil's present levels of achievement and sets long-range goals and annual objectives for improvement. The periodic objectives are then broken down into short-term objectives for a teacher's lesson plans and curriculum.

Goals may be set in basic skills—reading, computation, writing and speaking. They may also be set for body coordination, health and hygiene, self-concept, adjustment to school and community, physical education and recreation, and for vocational and career development. Some children may need self-help goals. A child may have a self-help goal of learning to dress himself or herself. A short-term objective to accomplish that goal could be basic skills such as learning to tie shoes, zip pants and button shirts.

In addition to goals and objectives, the educational plan must specify impartial criteria for measuring whether each objective has been met. The plan must also list the type of placement, when services are to begin and the anticipated amount of time the child will need to spend in each program or service. If a child in a special class or nonpublic school is expected to transfer to a regular class, the educational plan should contain methods for the transition.

Step 6—Enrollment in Special Program. No child may be enrolled in a special education program without written permission from the parent.

Step 7—Ongoing Evaluation of Pupil Progress. Each child enrolled in a special education program must be reviewed by the SAT or EAS at least once a year. At that time, the child's educational plan can be modified by joint agreement of the group. The parent can also request a review by the EAS any time he or she feels the child is not making adequate progress.

Rights of Parents and Students

Under the Master Plan, parents of exceptional children have important new rights. As previously noted, parents may participate in developing their child's educational program, and they can approve or veto testing and placement in special education.

In addition to these rights, parents and students have the right to appeal decisions on any of the following issues: identification of the student as an individual with exceptional needs; assessment of the student; implementation of the educational plan; and the denial, placement, transfer or termination of special service to a student.

The procedures for appeal are spelled out in state law:

- The parent or student requests a hearing panel. The RIA director or his designee must meet informally with the person to discuss the concern. The parent

has the right to examine any material in the child's file and to make copies at nominal expense. The *RIA* director may authorize modifications to the child's educational plan to satisfy the parent. If the meeting fails to resolve the problem, a fair hearing panel must be formed.

- The Fair Hearing Panel is composed of three impartial persons who are knowledgeable about the handicaps in question. The panel members may not be employees of the school district, county school system or of the SESR. Employees of private schools are also disqualified if the school is being considered for the student's placement. The parents select one panel member, the school district selects another and the two panelists select the third. If the panelists cannot agree, the choice is made by the county superintendent. If the superintendent is part of the hearing, he asks an administrator from another school district to make the selection.
- Either party can appeal the decision of the Fair Hearing Panel to the California state superintendent of public instruction. The parents and local agency may file oral or written appeals at a hearing before the state superintendent or his designee. After the hearing, the person who has heard the case must send a written decision with reasons to both the local agency and the parent.
- Both parties have the right to appeal to a civil court.

Paying for the Master Plan

The switch from categorical programs to the Master Plan is accompanied by increases in state special education allowances. The increases will compensate for increased program costs and inflation over the last 10 years since the categorical formulas were set. They will also be necessary to accommodate the increased number of eligible children who will be served.

Legislation allocates a specific amount of money for each special class, each resource specialist program and each hour of DIS. Funds are allocated on a per pupil basis:

- For nonpublic school services.
- For identification, assessment and instructional planning.
- For management and support services, including administrative services, program evaluation, staff development, instructional equipment and materials.
- For special transportation services.

In addition to determining the formulas for allocating funds for Master Plan implementation, AB 1250 instructs the state superintendent of public instruction to develop a proposal to provide funds "on an equalization basis for capital outlay, including the removal of architectural barriers for individuals with exceptional needs." The superintendent's proposal will help school

districts comply with the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which requires schools to make their programs accessible to handicapped persons.

Evaluation Requirements

Each SESR must evaluate the effectiveness of its Master Plan program in an annual report submitted to the state superintendent of public instruction. The state superintendent, in turn, will make a report to the State Board of Education, the Legislature and the governor. Each local report must contain:

- Costs of the Master Plan.
- Pupil performance.
- Number of pupils served by instructional setting (compared with the previous year).
- Changes in the placement of pupils to the least restrictive setting.
- Amount of parental involvement.
- Extent of staff development.
- Degree to which services are provided.
- Degree of interagency coordination.
- Extent that program objectives are met in terms of parent, pupil, teacher and administrator satisfaction.

Local agencies must also tabulate the number of exceptional children by race and ethnic group for the Master Plan categories: physically, communicatively, severely and learning handicapped.

DIS

Here's What DIS Means

Designated instruction and services (DIS) are available to pupils in both regular and special classes in the following areas:

- Language, speech and hearing.
- Audiological services.
- Visually handicapped.
- Orientation and mobility.
- Home and hospital instruction.
- Physical, occupational or other authorized therapy.
- Supplemental instruction and services.
- Adaptive physical education.
- Driver training instruction.
- Services in career preparation, work study and occupational training.
- Psychological services.
- School social work.
- Vision therapy.
- Specially designed physical education.

Six State Schools Provide Specialized Services

California has six residential schools to serve children whose needs are so specialized that they cannot be met by the local school district. They serve the blind, the deaf and the neurologically handicapped. Serving California residents ages 3 to 21 years free of charge, the schools are supported by the state as a specialized part of the public school system.

All six schools will continue to serve the same functions under the Master Plan. In fact, they have been involving parents and implementing individualized education plans—key ingredients of the Master Plan—for some time.

Their goal: to give special training or therapy to minimize the effects of the handicaps and to enable children to return to their local schools as quickly as possible.

California School for the Blind in Berkeley (K-8) serves blind, deaf-blind and multihandicapped

children. The elementary program is emphasized. Priority is given to the mastery of communication and mobility skills.

California Schools for the Deaf in Berkeley and Riverside (K-12) serve deaf and multihandicapped children (except deaf-blind). Priority is given to secondary students who need a comprehensive program and to elementary children whose needs cannot be met by the local school.

California Diagnostic Schools for the Neurologically Handicapped are situated in San Francisco, Fresno and Los Angeles. They serve learning disabled, autistic and emotionally disturbed children. Parent and child receive meals and lodging at the school during a five-day evaluation period. The results are discussed with the parents and local-school officials, and a joint decision is reached regarding the most appropriate placement for the child.

In addition to the annual reports, the state superintendent must order program and fiscal reviews to be conducted in Master Plan schools.

The California State Department of Education is expected to contract for independent evaluations of the program that measure long-range improvement of academic and nonacademic skills; satisfaction of parents, pupils, teachers and administrators; program effectiveness; and improvement of professional skills among school staff.

Interaction for the Handicapped

One of the Master Plan's primary goals is to end the traditional isolation of handicapped students. AB 1250 expresses this goal as a "program which promotes maximum interaction with the general school population in a manner which is appropriate to the needs of both." The federal Education for All Handicapped Children Act expresses the same philosophy by saying that handicapped children should be educated in the least restrictive environment appropriate to their needs.

Many people fear that "maximum interaction" and "least restrictive educational environment" mean that severely handicapped children will be "dumped" on teachers already struggling to serve the needs of 25 to 30 other children. This is not the intent of either law, since such a situation would not be appropriate to the needs of either handicapped or nonhandicapped children.

Instead, educators say regular class participation is intended for children who can generally function in the regular class but who need special help for part of the day from a resource specialist or DIS teacher. Although the regular teacher has the child for most of the day, a highly

trained specialist is available to work with the child on the child's greatest needs.

A number of California schools have been piloting the Master Plan since 1974. In these districts, some children have been moved from special to regular classes. Significantly, however, many who have been assigned to the resource specialist program were *already* enrolled in regular classes. Instead of adding to the burden of the regular teacher, the resource specialist program often brings help to students who traditionally have required much of the classroom teacher's attention.

Although placing handicapped children in regular classes can be successful, it is seldom easy. Directors in several pilot programs have found that training and additional help must be provided to the regular teacher if regular class placement for the handicapped is to be a success. Such training, however, should not be limited to the teacher; even the youngest nonspecial education students can be helped to understand and welcome a handicapped child to the classroom.

Education from Cradle to Adulthood

The Master Plan supports the concept of early childhood education by requiring that special education services be provided to certain children by age 3 and by encouraging educational agencies to provide help to even younger children.

RIAs must serve children between the ages of 3 and 4 years—9 months who need intensive special education services. Such children are eligible for special classes, state schools, nonpublic schools and designated instruction.

At the option of the local agency and with the approval

of the State Board of Education, programs also may be offered for children below age 3 who are profoundly handicapped or whose physical, emotional or intellectual development is seriously delayed.

Children above 4 years 9 months are eligible for kindergarten and the full range of special education services.

The preschool and infant programs fill the public schooling gap for children who need therapy and educational services before kindergarten age. The rationale for early special education is that the effects of a handicap can be minimized by reaching a child at a younger age. For example, it is important for deaf children to learn to communicate at the same age that most other children begin talking and understanding words. Children learn language when very young at a faster rate than at any other time in their lives. If deaf children do not receive special help during these critical early years, they start school several years behind in vocabulary. Catching up is extremely difficult because the time for rapid language learning has passed. Similar principles of development apply to other physical and mental abilities.

Just as the special needs of preschoolers are recognized, the Master Plan accommodates students

who need special services beyond age 18. Assembly Bill 1250 requires SESRs to serve 19 to 21 year-olds who meet the following two criteria:

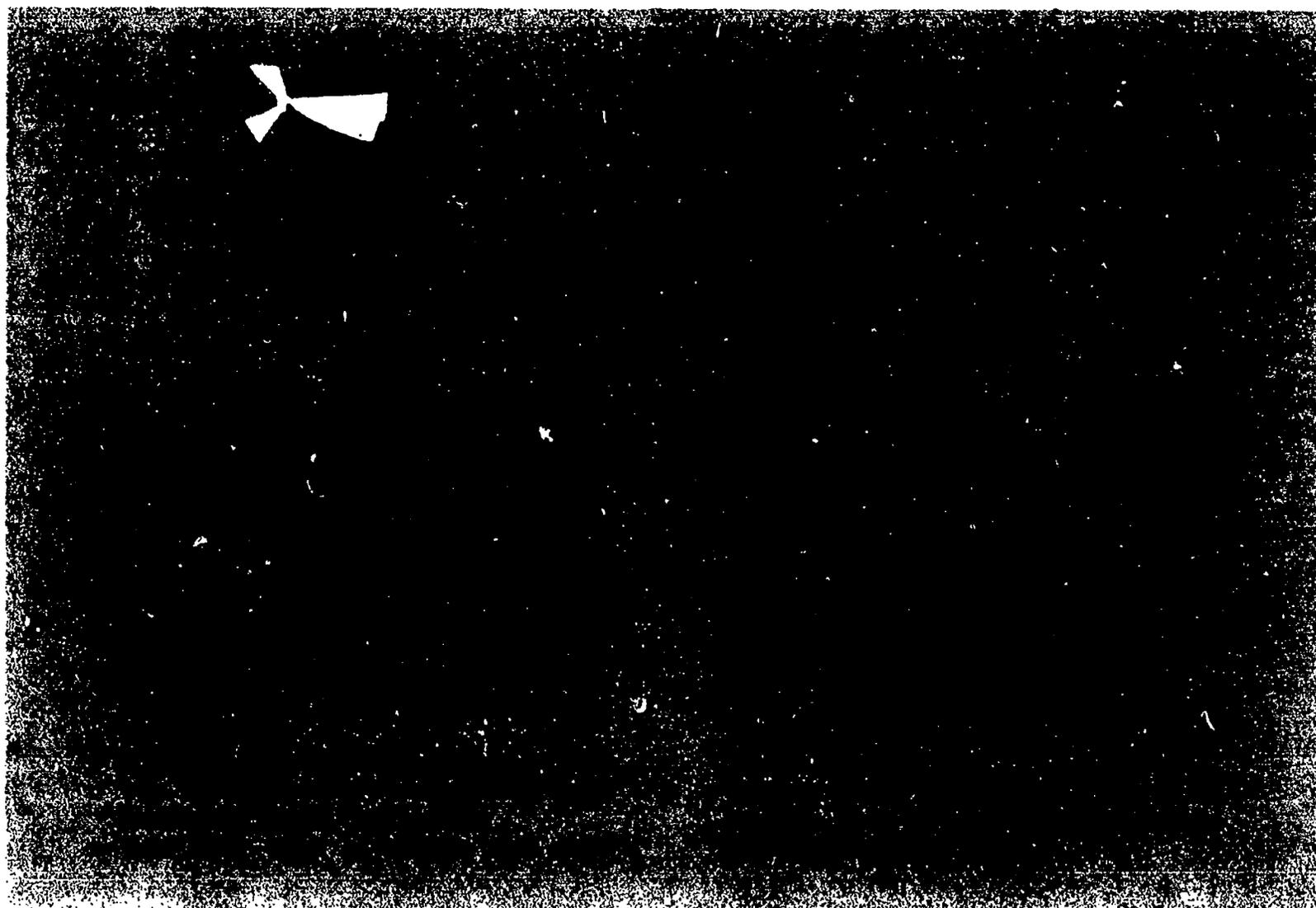
- They were enrolled or eligible for special education before their 19th birthday.
- They have not completed their prescribed education program.

By serving preschool, school-aged and postschool-aged individuals, the Master Plan provides exceptional individuals with the maximum opportunity to receive a meaningful public education.

Ingredients of the Local Plan

Procedures to carry out each of the Master Plan's provisions from individualized education to the appeals process must be spelled out in each local comprehensive plan. In addition to the key provisions previously described, the comprehensive plan must:

- Provide for development of a special education curriculum.
- Specify how the superintendent of each participating district will be involved in the policy



Instructional Goals of Special Education

The major instructional goals of special education are similar to those of general education. They are:

- *Communication skills*—to assist pupils in acquiring and using, to the extent of their capacity, the basic communication skills which will benefit the individual and society.
- *Information*—to assist pupils in learning how to obtain and use information.
- *Physical development*—to assist pupils in developing physically to the extent of their abilities.
- *Personal values*—to assist pupils in reaching and maintaining their mental and emotional potential and to establish acceptable moral and ethical standards.
- *Occupational preparation*—to assist pupils in

preparing for careers, ranging from working at home to full-time employment.

- *Problem solving*—to assist pupils in solving problems inherent to living in a complex and changing world.
- *Social values*—to assist the total education community in accepting the responsibility for preparing itself for maximum acceptance of children with a wider range of individual differences than may have been present during the past few years. The result will be that normal pupils will have greater understanding of individual differences and all persons will be better prepared to live in a world of infinite variety.
- *Development of intellectual potential*—to assist and promote the intellectual development of all exceptional individuals.

and decision-making process.

- Specify how each district special education administrator will coordinate administration within the SESR.
- Describe how psychological and health services will be provided.
- Provide opportunities for physical education.
- Provide for individualized career and vocational development, with emphasis on vocational training at the secondary level.
- Provide for seeking out all individuals with exceptional needs from birth through age 21 who live in the area served by the plan, including preschool and other children not enrolled in school programs.
- Provide for continuing staff development for regular and special education teachers, administrators, volunteers and other staff.

Community Advisory Committee

Each SESR must establish a community advisory committee to assist in the development of the local comprehensive plan and provide advice and support to the administration. Parents must compose a majority of the committee, including parents of handicapped and nonhandicapped children. The committee must also include special education students, regular and special education teachers, other school personnel, representatives of other public and private agencies and

persons interested in the needs of exceptional individuals.

Each local comprehensive plan must specify the selection procedure for committee members and the duties of the committee. In addition to advising the RLA in the development of the plan, the committee should encourage public involvement in the plan's development, assist in parent education and help review programs.

Staff Training

A smooth and successful transition to the Master Plan depends on adequate inservice training for all persons involved in the implementation: regular and special education teachers, paraprofessionals, principals, parents and the specialists who participate in the SAT and EAS.

Assembly Bill 1250 requires the training of school personnel to identify pupils with exceptional needs. Parent education is the responsibility of community advisory committees (CACs), which are discussed later in this report.

Inservice training for all instructional staff should be designed and implemented by a group that includes classroom teachers, the principal and other school employees. Classroom teachers should constitute a majority of the group. The training should include a diversity of activities, and it should be regularly scheduled during the year. The content should be evaluated and modified on a continuing basis.

Chapter II



Pilot Programs: View from the Vanguard

In April 1974, just three months after the Master Plan was adopted by the State Board of Education, Assemblyman Frank Lanterman introduced AB 4040. This bill created a three-year pilot program and appropriated \$24 million, enough to fund six Responsible Local Agencies (RLA) the first year. An RLA is the school district or other geographic area designated as the agent responsible for coordination of the Master Plan for Special Education in the SESR. AB 4040 passed both houses unanimously and was signed by the governor on Sept. 27, 1974.

The first six RLAs were funded during 1975 and began serving children during the 1975-76 school year. They are:

- *Sacramento City Unified School District* - a school district with 43,000 students.
- *Santa Monica Unified School District* - a school district with 14,000 students.
- *Contra Costa County* - a county office of education and 16 school districts with 57,000 students.
- *Stanislaus County* - a county office of education and 29 districts with 53,000 students.
- *Humboldt-Del Norte Counties* - two counties and 38 districts with 27,000 students.
- *Santa Barbara County* - a county office of education and 24 districts with 55,500 students.

At the end of their first year under the Master Plan, the six RLAs were evaluated by the California State Department of Education. In spite of the normal problems associated with starting up a new system, the

pilot programs registered significant progress toward meeting Master Plan goals. They served 24 percent more exceptional children than in the previous year. At the same time, the number of exceptional pupils who were identified and unserved was reduced nearly 80 percent by moving children from waiting lists into programs.

Parent involvement in educational decisions is a cornerstone of the Master Plan. The evaluation found that personal contacts between special education parents and the school increased 198 percent over the previous year.

In 1975, the California legislature appropriated additional funds for Master Plan pilot programs. The money enabled four more RLAs to begin operating, bringing the number of RLAs up to the limit of 10 authorized by AB 4040. The four new RLAs began serving children in 1976-77. They are:

- *Los Angeles Unified School District, Area D* - one of 12 administrative areas in the district. Area D serves more than 42,000 students.
- *San Juan Unified School District* - a district with 50,000 students in the suburbs of Sacramento.
- *Whittier Area Cooperative* - eight school districts with 50,000 students.
- *Tulare County* - one county office of education and 49 school districts with 61,000 students.

Although the 10 pilot programs share many similarities, the flexibility of the Master Plan has enabled each RLA to develop certain innovations that tailor the plan more closely to local needs. The following are examples:

Identifying Children Who Need Help

Classroom teachers often lack training in the identification of children with exceptional needs. And yet the classroom teacher is possibly in the best position to spot the handicapped child who could benefit from part-time special education programs. Checklists for elementary and secondary teachers were developed by at least one program. The checklists contain a series of statements describing problems that affect a child's success in school.

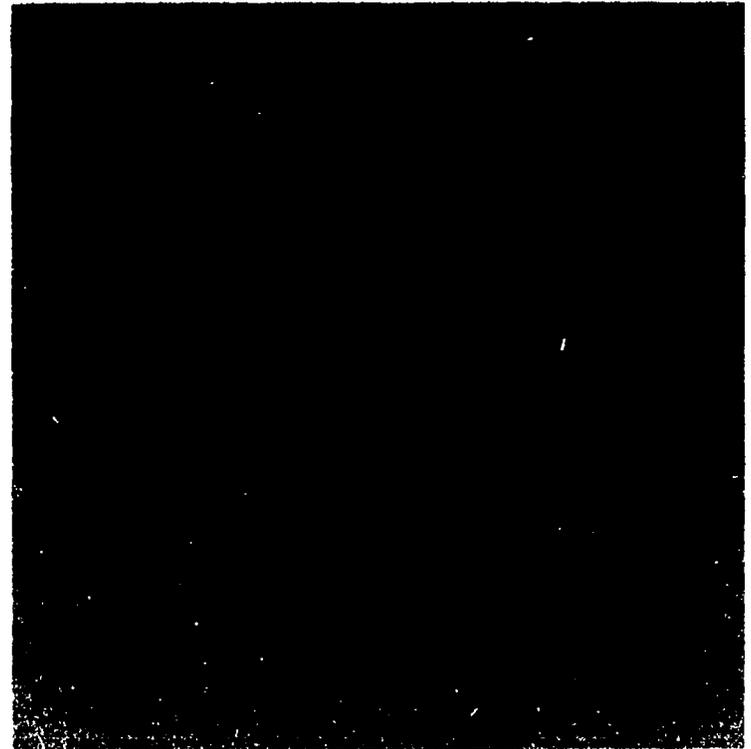
At the start of the school year, each teacher is asked to list children who have problems or characteristics noted on the checklist. A resource specialist collects the checklists and calls a meeting of the school's postscreening committee. The committee consists of the principal or administrative designee, the resource specialist, program specialist and other personnel as needed. The group reviews the checklists and determines which children should be referred to the SAT.

Not all children referred for evaluation actually need special education programs. A fear has been expressed, for example, that every child who can't read might be considered handicapped. The key to proper placement, in the opinion of an informed observer, is to first look at the child's strengths and weaknesses to see if the problem can be corrected through changes in the regular classroom. The experience of one program shows that about 30 percent of the children assessed remain in the classroom with some modification in the regular program. In one case, the team decided a disruptive sixth grade boy did not have emotional problems, but just needed stricter limits. At the team's suggestion, the classroom teacher established a point system for the student with satisfactory results.

Using Resource Specialists

Perhaps the greatest variation among the original RIAs is found in the interpretation of the role of the resource specialist. As outlined in the Master Plan, resource specialists fill a variety of roles, including teacher, coordinator and diagnostic consultant. Some of the programs emphasize the instructional role and assign the maximum limit of 24 children to the resource specialists.

One RIA is experimenting with the use of two categories of resource specialists to divide systematically the large number of duties assigned to the role. Approximately one-fourth of the staff are resource specialist leaders who serve 15 pupils and concentrate on coordination functions. The remaining three-fourths are resource specialist teachers who serve 24 pupils and specialize in instruction. The program found that there are more people who are very good in the classroom than there are people who are good at public relations, coordination and working with people. During the first two years of the program, some resource specialists continued teaching as many as 24 students and passed the coordinating tasks on to school administrators. Others



lowered their teaching load down to 15 and coordinated services as well.

Another program discovered its resource specialists also liked to devote their time to teaching. It responded, however, not with two categories of specialists, but with a job description that limits specialists to spending no more than 50 percent of their time in direct instruction. The specialists have a caseload of 24 pupils. Each child—either alone or in a group—receives about one hour a day of instruction from a resource specialist. Additional instruction is given by an aide under the supervision of the resource specialist or by the regular teacher in consultation with the specialist. Aides will often follow a child back to the regular classroom and work with the child there. In this way, the benefits of the Master Plan are extended to regular students and their teachers.

Most resource specialists in at least one program concentrate on coordinating special education services, consulting with regular teachers and assessing children. Individual and small group instruction—usually assigned to the resource specialist in other programs—is assigned to DIS (Designated Instruction and Services) teachers in elementary schools.

Resource specialists in this program spend *some* time in instruction. But the instruction is limited to demonstration teaching and diagnostic activities. For example, a resource specialist may work with a child on several tasks to find out how the child learns. The purpose of such instruction is diagnostic, not remedial. Resource specialists also demonstrate teaching techniques and introduce new curricula to the classroom teacher.

The primary role of resource specialists in the program's junior and senior high schools is to provide instruction. Such a procedure is more compatible with the structure and sequence of secondary courses.

In another case, a program experimented with assigning a larger caseload to resource specialists. It gave each resource specialist 28 students rather than 24. From this experience, the program advises against the larger caseload. The larger caseload was "extremely difficult" for the resource specialists to handle, along with their other duties. Now each resource specialist is serving no more than 24 pupils.

Using Volunteers

All programs have found volunteers to be a valuable addition to the Master Plan. One program began using volunteers by recruiting retired teachers to help in the resource room and special classes. The volunteer force grew by "word of mouth through the grannies." Now about 130 volunteers give more than two hours' help each day in both special and regular classes. "We're getting fantastic service," a program spokesperson said. "They're like an extra set of caring hands."

Some of the volunteers receive a stipend through the federally funded Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). At least one-third, however, work for nonmonetary rewards. All volunteers whether paid or not sign each child's educational plan as a provider of service. "This gives them sanction and importance. They no longer see themselves as volunteers."

Providing inservice Training

An on-the-job approach to training teachers was followed by at least one of the programs. The best inservice training happens when a regular teacher comes to a SAI (School Appraisal Team) meeting to talk about a student, the project spokesperson said. The Master Plan becomes personal and meaningful because the teacher knows he or she will get help for that student.

Inservice training for principals also was considered important since principals are usually highly involved "doers" and change agents. Project leaders admitted that they did not properly "inservice" their principals and, as a result, the project suffered.

The principal needs to understand the role of the resource specialist, and to undergo the experience of role-playing a SAI meeting. The Master Plan was pilot-tested in seven schools during the planning stages of one project. This gave "hands-on" experience to only a few principals. If all principals could have had some direct experience, instead of just reading about it or attending a conference, some problems could have been avoided.

Professionals who participate in SAI and EAS (Educational Assessment Service) meetings need training in group dynamics and conflict resolution, a project director asserted. When professionals differ and argue in the meeting, it confuses parents and can be counter-productive. Group process training can equip people to express themselves clearly and in a constructive way.

One RLA hired consultants who sat in on some SAI and EAS meetings and then talked to administrators. The consultants designed role-playing models which

were used in a two-day workshop. The role-plays were videotaped so each participating district could share them with their own staff.

Timing of inservice training can also have a direct bearing on its effectiveness. Experience taught at least one program that teachers and specialists must perceive a need for training before they will be receptive to it.

The experience of eight schools which piloted the resource specialist program during the planning phase provides an important lesson. Each school had its own approach and ran into different problems during the one-year shakedown. The cooperative wrote a handbook from the memos sent during the year, and the resource specialists "loved it." The handbook was accepted readily for two reasons. The specialists perceived a need for it, and they respected the handbook because the contents were based on their own experience.

Those with the greatest need for training, however, are the classroom teachers. But, as one program leader said, they are likely to be the least receptive because of all the requirements of other state-mandated programs they are expected to fulfill. Once they see how the Master Plan can help them and their children, however, they are usually more likely to want training.

Improving Management of Time

After the staff has been trained, it is useful to evaluate jobs to see if actual practice resembles the original concept. One project developed a time management study that has been used with resource specialists and will be expanded to include program specialists and DIS teachers. Objective observers were hired to "shadow" the resource specialists for five days in May. Project leaders recommend scheduling such studies for early fall to allow time for changes during the same school year. The time management studies were designed by a 15-member program and instruction advisory committee composed of persons representing each job type in the Master Plan. Because the studies were designed by the staff, there was greater acceptance by those being studied.

Using Advisory Committees

Community advisory committees (CACs) in the pilot RLAs assumed a variety of duties, from parent education and training to evaluation of the local comprehensive plan. In each case, the local committee chose activities that were in keeping with local interests and priorities.

A major priority of one RLA's community advisory committee was to develop parent advisory committees (PACs) at the district level. Almost half of the school districts in the RLA developed separate PACs. Two regional PACs were developed to serve smaller districts in the northern and southern portions of the project's territory. The PACs review programs, make suggestions for changes and do "trouble-shooting," such as calling attention to the need for more playground equipment at a special center.

The CAC concentrates on parent advocacy activities,

such as training, hearing parent grievances and accompanying parents to SAT and EAS meetings at the parent's request.

Training for parents is planned collaboratively by the CAC, other interested parents and county staff. In a one-day workshop on communication skills, parents were given an opportunity to role-play a SAT meeting. They were also taught their rights of appeal and how to work within the organization for change.

A CAC in another project also encouraged development of PACs at the school level. The membership of the PACs is similar to the CAC; both contain a majority of parents, including parents of handicapped and nonhandicapped children. They also contain representatives of agencies serving the handicapped children as well as teachers and administrators in the district or RIA.

The PACs visit local schools to get feedback and assist with the evaluation of programs. They also recruit volunteers to help in special and regular classrooms.

The CAC concentrated on building public awareness of the Master Plan and on program evaluation. During the first two years, the committee established a speakers bureau and encouraged newspaper and television coverage to explain the Master Plan and its emphasis on identifying children in need of special services. Committee members review studies made by the RIA and visit Master Plan schools to collect their own information for program evaluations. These visits sometimes suggest other areas that need evaluating.

One of the CAC's accomplishments has been to improve services to preschool-aged handicapped children. Through the efforts of the council's standing committee on preschool special education, three programs for handicapped children were integrated into one building.

In all three programs, specialists visited children in their homes and taught parents to stimulate their children intellectually and physically. The services also included an assessment and an educational plan that were provided through the SAT or EAS.

Both district and county advisory committees helped to develop and evaluate the comprehensive plan of another RIA. Each committee also reviews budget allocations and disseminates information to the public.

The committees provide an important two-way communications link: they act as a sounding board for parent complaints; and they can also mobilize community support for special education.

Another RIA's community advisory committee (CAC) has declared that its purpose is "to act in support of individuals with exceptional needs by representing broad interests in the community and by promoting maximum interaction of parents and community members with the department of special education and the school district."

The CAC advises the comprehensive plan unit for special education and, through channels, the board of education regarding the further development of the

comprehensive plan, the review of programs under the plan and annual priorities. In addition, the CAC assists the comprehensive plan unit with district-developed parent education, public information and community involvement projects. Ad hoc committees are appointed by the CAC's chairperson as needed to carry out responsibilities.

It holds 10 regularly scheduled meetings on the second Thursday evening of each month - September through June. All meetings are open to the public, and community involvement is encouraged.

Recruiting Parents

One program's CAC contains parent representatives from each school who are recruited through the school's PTA. These parents become the special education representatives for that school and report back to the PTA board.

The PTA network can be outstanding, says the CAC chairperson, because it facilitates communication between regular parents and special education parents. When recruiting parents through the PTA, first priority is given to parents of children in special classes and in the resource specialist program. But the committee has some very dedicated parents of nonhandicapped children.

As required by law, parents constitute a majority of the committee. Members also include representatives of the nursing staff, private schools, a coordinator of special education, an employee of the city parks and recreation department and a representative of a regional center for the developmentally disabled.

This CAC sees its basic role as one of educating parents and teachers. "We're trying to raise the level of awareness of the community about the Master Plan," its chairperson says. At the same time, the committee tries to sensitize school professionals to the needs and fears of parents. "When parents and teachers understand each other, the SAT meeting is bound to be more successful," the chairperson explains.

"You can't convince a parent that a plan is going to work," she says. The solution is not only to sensitize teachers, she adds, but to train parents to express their concerns and to learn how they as parents can help.

Developing the Comprehensive Plan

Every interest group that will be affected by the local comprehensive plan should be informed about and involved in the planning. That's the advice of more than one RIA director. The way to make people knowledgeable is to put them to work actually developing the plan.

More than 350 parents, teachers, administrators and others took part in working committees developing the RIA plan over a period of 18 months. As each committee finished with a proposal, it was reviewed by a group of special education directors and by the CAC. When these two groups were satisfied, the section was forwarded to

Statewide Implementation Moves Ahead

The State Board of Education at its March 1978 meeting adopted a plan for statewide phase-in of the Master Plan by 1981-82.

The phase-in will be on a regional basis of not more than six regions and the Los Angeles Unified School District.

At the same March meeting, the Board approved seven more RLAs (in addition to the original 10). They were:

- Riverside County
- San Diego Unified School District
- Santa Clara County, North (Zone 1)
- Merced County
- Santa Cruz-San Benito counties

- Glenn County
- Fresno Unified School District

Nine more RLAs were approved by the Board at its December 1978 meeting. They were:

- Butte County
- Marin County
- Santa Clara County (Zone 2)
- Santa Clara County (Zone 7)
- West San Gabriel
- Orange Unified
- West Orange County
- San Bernardino West
- Los Angeles Unified (Area D)

Each school district for scrutiny by the superintendent, staff and school board.

Each school board had at least two opportunities to review and comment upon the plan. The result? "The plan worked beautifully because everyone had a hand in structuring it," the director claims. "It's their plan."

Additional reasons why it is important to involve all interested parties in the planning are offered by another RLA director. "In order to create change, you have to have commitment," he says. "You can't just lay a system on people; you will just create resentment." Educators and interested citizens in his RLA also spent 18 months preparing their comprehensive plan. He also cautions that it is important to study the organizational structure within each district in order to design a delivery system that is compatible with that structure. Planners "need to look at who does what in each district rather than to overlay a system and reassign people," he says. "Everyone should know what the chain of command is and who the decision-making body is. Roles and responsibilities should be carefully specified," he explains.

Using a Cooperative

An RLA can involve a group of districts operating independently of a county. The alliance can be a natural one if the districts have cooperatively provided special education services with "low incidence" handicaps.

One RLA that operated in this configuration found that transition to the Master Plan was smooth in many respects because the cooperative structure was already in place. Re-bonding was needed, however, because the Master

Plan involves more services, more staff and considerably more children.

Policy for the cooperative is determined by a joint powers board comprised of district superintendents. Administration is directed by one school district which is the designated RLA.

One possible advantage the co-op has over the county structure is that superintendents have greater identification with the programs in their schools. In the past, county programs usually have been operated in local schools with teachers paid at different salary schedules, a situation that creates divisiveness. Local control eliminates the divisiveness and makes integration of exceptional children easier.

One disadvantage of the co-op is that it puts the school board designated as the RLA administrator in the position of making decisions for the other district school boards. Although this has worked smoothly in a pilot program, the potential for conflict exists. For this reason, the co-op hired consultants to do a management study and to develop a structure to ensure that decision making is equitable.

Cooperative working relationships have also been a challenge to a rural county program. The challenge has been met through a policy advisory committee composed of district superintendents. The committee includes representatives of small, medium, and large-sized districts and of elementary and high school districts. In addition to the superintendents, the committee has one representative of special education administrators in the county. The policy committee and a general respect for local autonomy are given credit for the program's success.

Using Computers

Record-keeping requirements contained in the state and federal special education laws make a computer and an efficient management information system a necessity for each RLA. Both laws require that handicapped children be counted according to several criteria. The state law also requires detailed records of programs and services provided.

In addition to the record-keeping functions, a computer helps to ensure that all requirements of the state law are met for each child. The computer can be used to determine that goals are established for each child and are reviewed at least annually. A computer can also

play a key role in making sure that deadlines are met for notifying parents and for scheduling placement meetings.

Some programs use computers to keep track of their exceptional children. The program can be modified to incorporate changes in data collection requirements and can be generalized to any school system in the United States.

Fully automated management information systems have also been used. Other SESRs are advised by those that use these systems to adapt an existing system, rather than spend time developing an entirely new computer program. Such a process requires about two years, time the SESR "can't afford."

For More Information

For more information about the pilot programs, write or call these RLA directors:

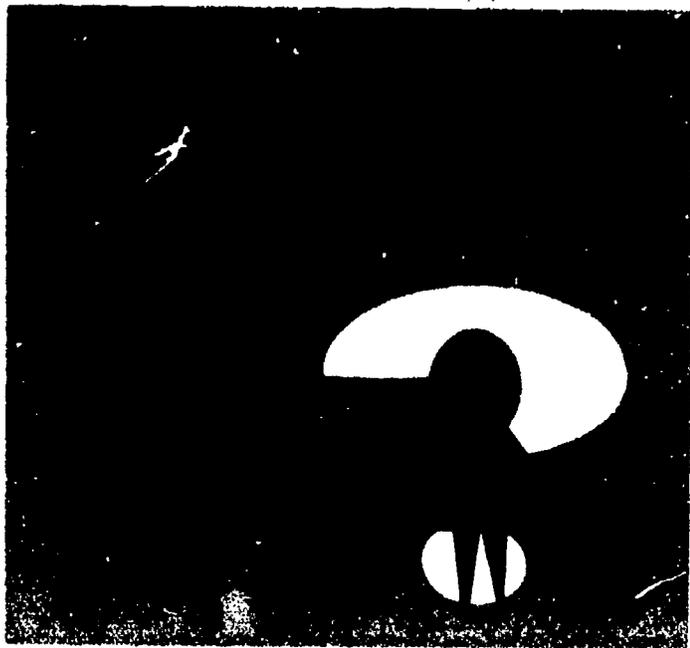
- Richard Yamamoto, associate superintendent
Contra Costa County Office of Education
75 Santa Barbara Road
Pleasant Hills, CA 94523, (415) 944-3376
- Dewell H. Byrd, director
Humboldt-Del Norte Master Plan
Humboldt County Office of Education
P.O. Box 1408
Eureka, CA 95501, (707) 455-7701
- Esther L. Herbert, project director
Master Plan for Special Education
Los Angeles Unified School District
P.O. Box 3307, Terminal Annex
Los Angeles, CA 90051, (213) 625-6708
- Frank Taylor, director
Comprehensive Plan for Special Education
Santa Monica Unified School District
1723 Fourth Street
Santa Monica, CA 90401, (213) 393-2785
- Paul M. Hillar, director
Stanislaus Comprehensive Plan
for Special Education
Stanislaus County Office of Education
801 County Center III Ct
Modesto, CA 95355, (209) 526-6596
- Richard E. Stivelli, director
Comprehensive Plan for Special Education
Sacramento City Unified School District
P.O. Box 2271
Sacramento, CA 95810; (916) 454-8545
- Ralph Richardson, director
Comprehensive Plan for Special Education
San Juan Unified School District
4848 Cottage Way
Carmichael, CA 95608; (916) 482-5474
- Lawrence Schram, manager
Comprehensive Plan for Special Education
Santa Barbara County Office of Education
P.O. Box 6307
Santa Barbara, CA 93111; (805) 964-4711
- Guy Chapman, director
Comprehensive Plan for Special Education
Tulare County Office of Education
County Civic Center
Visalia, CA 93277; (209) 733-6324
- Larry Lindstrom, director
Whittier Area Cooperative
for Special Education
14611 E. Broadway
Whittier, CA 90604; (213) 944-0241

Advice from the Field

From their experiences in the pilot programs, the first RLA directors learned useful lessons which they agreed to share with other school districts and counties. Here are samples:

- "Don't try to phase in the Master Plan. Our RLA received about one-third of its funding the first year and was expected to 'phase in' the Master Plan over a three-year period. At the end of the first year, all programs were expected to start at the same time. Phasing-in is like diving into a pool of water part way. The problem with partial implementation is that people who get extra work and not all the benefits get a sour view of the Master Plan. Only 30 percent of the resource specialists were hired the first year. Although we were funded one-third, we expected full cooperation, which was unrealistic. RLAs should implement the Master Plan simultaneously in all districts. If that is not possible, involve as many of the large districts as possible the first year."
- "A different problem arises when an SESR must implement the Master Plan on short notice. We were approved as a pilot program about two months before the school year began. Although the district would have preferred to implement all programs simultaneously—faced with the time limitations—we chose to place a priority on the hiring and training of resource specialists. There was a sense of 'second class citizenship' from the designated instructors and special class teachers. It was necessary, however, to focus on the resource specialists because of the key roles they play in the assessment process and in safeguarding the rights of parents and pupils. We do not regret the decision. At the beginning of the year, the role of the resource specialist was not clearly understood, but by the end many principals were seeking increased assistance at their schools."
- "In SESRs fortunate to have time to implement all services at once, the potential still exists for resentment toward the resource specialists. While resource specialists, as a new service, will need lots of help, administrators should remember that the other special education teachers will face many of the same problems. The best way to avoid resentment from special education teachers is to simply be aware that the potential for resentment exists. Don't devote so much attention to the resource specialist that you forget they are part of a bigger team."
- "Don't create unrealistic hopes about the Master Plan. The message that has got to get across is that this is not a panacea. The Master Plan was not developed to replace traditional special education programs but to improve them. There are a lot of good things going on in traditional special education programs. I advise giving equal emphasis to all program components to avoid misunderstanding. In stressing the resource specialist program, the special class got lost. People thought we were doing away with special classes."
- "Don't forget the consumer. Include students wherever possible on committees, comprehensive plan reviews and in input sessions."
- "We found that parents respond well to a positive approach. Part of our inservice training for resource specialists stresses the need for notes going home with the child about positive progress at school. About 75 percent of the school's contacts with parents are positive. As a result, a high proportion of parents are attending SAT and end-of-the-year evaluations. We estimate that participation of special education parents has increased from about 10 percent before the Master Plan went into effect to a districtwide average of 50 percent under the Master Plan. A positive emphasis can also be beneficial for classroom teachers. Our resource specialists are instructed not to use jargon words in describing exceptional children to regular teachers. If you say, 'he's brain damaged' or 'she's dyslexic,' it sets up an expectation of failure. If you say, 'he can be too easily distracted' or 'she needs motivation,' the teachers feel they can do something about it."

Chapter III



Problems and Possibilities

The new approach to special education required by the Master Plan and federal laws brings with it both anxieties and anticipation of substantial improvements in the education of handicapped children. Some teachers and administrators have concerns about problems that can arise, while many parents are filled with hope about the benefits that are in store for their children.

Nonhandicapped children can benefit from having carefully selected handicapped children in their classes, and the community as a whole can benefit from a program that provides handicapped children a far better opportunity to become productive citizens.

Administrative Problems

Five basic administrative problems have been identified by theorists and practitioners of special education programs as potential outcomes of the Master Plan.

Here is a list of five problems and responses from those who have implemented the Master Plan:

(1) Learning disability groups will be abolished.

Reaction: Children in learning disability groups can receive the same services in the resource specialist program. Some learning disability group services may be retained through designated instruction and services.

(2) Inservice training of teachers will be costly. Collective bargaining agreements cover working conditions, which include the number of hours worked. Teachers may not be willing to stay after school, so money may be needed to provide substitutes to permit training during the day. The problem of teacher release time could also affect their attendance at SAT meetings. Elementary teachers do not have planning periods and

high school teachers with 150 students may be resentful.

Reaction: Teachers in pilot Master Plan schools have been willing to stay for the meetings and training. It must be remembered, however, that most of the pilot programs are not in large urban areas and may not be as affected by collective bargaining agreements. Inservice training for regular teachers has been given "on-the-job" by many resource specialists. Inservice training can be done through a minimum day schedule a few times a year. Also, a school can schedule an assembly or a film for one grade level and train the teachers while the students are attending the program. Informed observers believe a good collective bargaining contract should have a clause that allows management to schedule time for professional activities. On the issue of teachers attending SAT meetings, some administrators have recommended rotating an aide to a class where a teacher must be absent for one period. State law allows an aide to monitor a class as long as the aide is under the supervision of a teacher.

(3) Parent requests for private school care will proliferate and be too expensive.

Reaction: The opposite happened in Los Angeles and Humboldt-Del Norte. Los Angeles expanded its special classes to serve children who have previously attended private schools in the city. In Humboldt-Del Norte, private school placements have decreased. Under the Master Plan, public schools can provide a more comprehensive range of services. However, some public school officials are still concerned about this potential problem. They believe that if the appeals process is misused, private school placements could break the nation.

(4) Time constraints for diagnosis and placement will be difficult to meet. State law requires schools to assess children within a given time limit after they are referred to the SAT or EAS. The federal Public Law 94-142 says handicapped children must have an individualized education program within 30 class days of the start of school or within 30 days of placement.

Reaction: Master Plan pilot RIAs did live within the time constraints. Special education students were "grandfathered in" during the first year of implementation.

(5) Paperwork will be overwhelming.

Reaction: The paperwork was horrendous the first year for most of the RIAs, and it is still a problem for some. Parents must be notified (on paper) when their child is referred, admitted, reviewed or transferred from a special education program. Many sheets of paper are used to describe the child's individualized education program and the short-term instructional objectives. The process, however, has been streamlined by shortening and refining forms in many RIAs.

The Positive Side

Many regular classroom teachers may see the Master Plan as an intolerable burden. It means extra meetings and additional work to individualize classwork for the child with special needs.

Those teachers who did not have special education courses in college may feel unprepared and fear that they will fail. Inservice training can help allay some of those fears, but the most effective solution is simply to go through the experience once. A study of teacher attitudes reported in *Education*, the quarterly journal, found that teachers who had taught handicapped children in their classroom were more positive toward mainstreaming than teachers who had not had this experience.

Classroom teachers often became much more receptive to the Master Plan once they began working with the special education teachers and aides. In one SESR, when a special education child leaves the resource specialist, a special education aide often goes with him or her. There are usually at least three other children who need special help in that class, and the aide can work with all four. In that way, the regular teacher benefits.

Similarly, when a resource specialist develops instructional materials to help a special child in a regular class, the materials may help nonhandicapped children as well. When you enrich a classroom with new materials, you help all the children.

Impact on Teachers

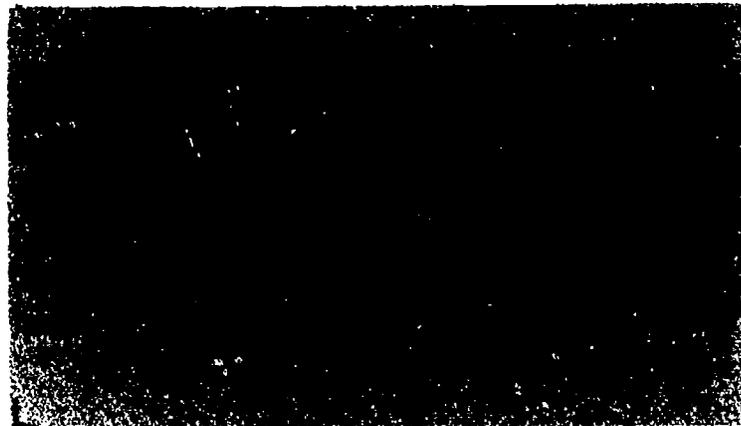
The Master Plan has some "bugs" at the secondary level, according to one junior high resource specialist. He feels it is harder to mainstream secondary students in midsemester because of the faster pace of classes. In addition, resource specialists cannot be expected to teach all the specialized subjects available in junior and senior high. Another problem is caseload sizes.

In spite of the problems, however, there are many successes. Ted, an 8th grader, started the year in a special day class because of his hostile, disruptive behavior. The teacher worked with Ted and 11 other students on such preacademic skills as paying attention and sitting still in class. After five months, Ted moved to the resource room. "After two months, he chose to go back to regular classes," says the resource specialist. "We placed Ted with different teachers, and one commented that he didn't know Ted was any different from the other students," she explains with pride. Half the teachers graded Ted as satisfactory in work habits and cooperation, and half gave him an excellent grade.

Special class teachers and resource specialists alike are enthusiastic about parent participation. "The parents have a greater understanding and a more positive attitude toward school," says another resource specialist. "It has lessened the parents' fear of the handicapped label. They see that their children aren't abnormal." A special class teacher says that through parent participation teachers learn whether the child's improved behavior in the classroom is carrying over to the home.

Impact on the Handicapped

One great hope shared by many handicapped activists is that increased contact between disabled and able-bodied persons will trigger an attitude shift toward all handicapped persons. "The vast majority of society thinks of a poster child when they think of handicapped persons . . . the 'poor helpless cripple'," says Mike Vader, manager of Affirmative Action for the Disabled at the California State Personnel Board. Vader, who had



polio at age six, hopes children educated under the Master Plan will be spared the isolation he experienced in California schools in the 1950s. He spent four years in special schools, mixed in with all types of handicapped children, an atmosphere he characterizes as "almost babysitting." Although later integrated into regular classes, Vader was still excluded from meaningful participation in physical education. "My teachers did not know how to deal with me," he said. "I would be sent to the locker room to fold towels while the other kids played baseball."

Vader also experienced ridicule and neglect at the hands of his classmates who did not know how to relate to a handicapped person. By integrating the handicapped into regular classes, the Master Plan will enable nonhandicapped children to understand the special problems of the disabled and to accept them as individuals, he says. The regular classes will give the handicapped child an opportunity to relate to the nonhandicapped—a skill they will need the rest of their lives.

Vader believes parents of handicapped children tend to be overprotective and that special programs can also shelter children too much. "You need to give a child the opportunity to fail or he can never taste success," he says. Viewed another way, the handicapped adult will have a difficult time coping if he has never experienced failure as a child.

"I hope people are open enough to make the Master Plan a success," Vader adds. "People can think of 100 reasons why it won't work." He calls for training of principals and teachers. "If a teacher does not want a handicapped child in her classroom, the other students will pick up on that feeling." In such cases, he concludes, "a child can suffer some detrimental effects that are worse than keeping him isolated."

Impact on Parents

The federal law and the Master Plan represent important milestones in establishing the right of parents to have a voice in their child's education. Such a right is particularly important for the parent of a handicapped child because the parent is in the best position to know the needs and the strengths of the child. In addition to participation in the child's placement meeting, a parent can be an important partner in the child's education by reinforcing the social skills and positive school experiences at home.

This partnership is a striking change from past relations between educators and parents of exceptional children. Historically, educators blamed parents of retarded children for their child's disability. Parents were often expected to offer solutions and to bear the burden of failure.

Under the Master Plan, the school has a responsibility to find a solution. The burden has changed from putting guilt on the parent to having the school offer solutions, justify programs and be accountable for the child's progress.

One of the reasons parents don't want to come to school is that all too often communication with the school has been negative. SESRs, however, have had a higher degree of parent participation. One reason: Teachers are encouraged to have frequent, positive contacts with the home.

Stressing the positive is also important in the SAI and EAS meetings. Such meetings can be traumatic for parents because their child's education is at stake and because the parent is frequently outnumbered by high-powered specialists. When the educators can take pains to mention a child's strengths as well as the weaknesses,

the meeting can be more productive and pleasant for parents.

Because the Master Plan is an improvement over the old system, optimistic parents can fall into the trap of thinking new teachers and new services will "cure" their child, erasing all vestiges of her or his disability.

One parent, who is active on a CAC, says the Master Plan concept is threatened when people start looking to it for cures and threatening lawsuits. "Regular programs don't promise to turn out scholars, and the Master Plan can't promise to turn out normal students," she explains. "It's important to help parents accept the reality of their child's handicap."

Sometimes parental expectations can be a problem for the professional. One parent expresses a hope that administrators will approach the Master Plan as an opportunity rather than a burden. "We need commitment, not just compliance. Unfortunately," she adds, "there are some people who are interested only in protecting against lawsuits." And then there are people who really want to serve the handicapped—people who really believe kids are entitled to equal educational opportunity.

Another parent also active in a local CAC fears that the Master Plan may promise too much. No school has an endless amount of money, and some children will get fewer hours of therapy or service than their parents feel are necessary. "The Master Plan brings great hope that many children will reach their highest potential," she says. "But that promise is tempered by financial limits."

Impact on the Regular Student

Some parents of nonhandicapped children fear that the presence of handicapped children in regular classes will adversely affect the quality of their child's education. In fact, according to educators who have implemented the Master Plan, the resource specialist program for handicapped students benefits all students in the class by providing new instructional materials and consultant help to the classroom teacher.

Perhaps more important, the handicapped child can add a new dimension to the class, they point out. When young children become friends with a person who is different, they usually gain sensitivity and an appreciation for individual differences.

The validity of this premise has been proven in a Modesto elementary school which formed an Amigo Club. It pairs regular students with orthopedically handicapped students. Club members meet the buses, help the handicapped children with their wraps and assist the children with swimming during adaptive physical education. The Amigo Club has become a status symbol—the "in" thing to do—and the regular students are fighting to get in. When a new school was built and some of the children were split up, parents expressed regret that their children would no longer have contact with the handicapped children. The parents felt their child's participation in the Amigo Club made the child more tolerant of others.

Impact on Society

An improved system of special education can benefit society by reaching and serving children with learning problems—children who now “fall through the cracks” of the school system and turn to deviant behavior. Persons involved in the juvenile justice system have discovered a surprisingly high correlation between juvenile delinquency and an inability to learn. In 1975, the Santa Clara County Office of Education conducted a study of students in the juvenile court schools in San Diego, Los Angeles and Santa Clara counties. The study found that 83 percent of the more than 1,000 students in juvenile court schools were eligible for educationally handicapped programs.

In Colorado, one special education teacher assigned to work with teenagers at a short-term detention facility estimated that 98 percent of the juveniles had at least one learning disability. Another Colorado facility informally diagnosed juveniles by asking them to fill out a form upon admission. The staff was shocked to learn that about one-fourth could not tell time, distinguish right from left or identify colors or days of the week. Another one-fourth failed a visual screening designed to test depth perception and color blindness.

Children with such undiagnosed learning problems are destined to fail repeatedly, become frustrated and drop out of school. Without skills, they are unable to find work or acceptance, school officials point out. Under such circumstances, many young people turn to drugs and crime.

Persons with severe physical handicaps become dependent in their ways. The federal government paid \$9 billion in social security benefits to nearly 3 million disabled persons in 1976, according to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare's Social Security Administration. In the past, persons with the ability to work have been relegated to low-paying jobs because of job discrimination. For those with expensive medical bills, it was not feasible to work because they could lose Medicare benefits.

The vicious dependency cycle can be broken through special education and vocational training. A study was conducted by W.L. Findley of Colorado State College in 1976 of 105 mentally retarded persons who received

vocational training in public schools in Texas and Colorado. In three of the four cities, the average pupil was expected to repay the cost of his or her education in income taxes after 10 years of work.

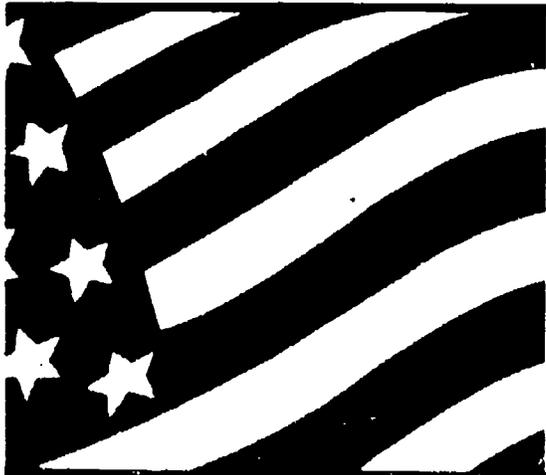
A study in 1971 by George Wright and Kenneth Reagles of the University of Wisconsin Regional Rehabilitation Research Institute found that medically handicapped persons would return \$25 in increased lifetime earnings for each dollar spent on vocational rehabilitation. In addition, 89 percent of the physically disabled, emotionally disturbed and mentally retarded persons who received help were able to move from the welfare rolls to gainful employment—an estimated savings of \$200,000 each year.

Special education can also benefit persons who are too severely handicapped to work. The retarded person who would otherwise be institutionalized can lead a more meaningful life if special training can equip that person to live at home. Others, with training, can lead fairly independent lives in group homes. In addition to individual benefits, society benefits when handicapped persons need fewer state-supported services.

Although dollars and cents are important, the most compelling reason for special education is a human one. “Everyone wants to regard himself or herself as a productive member of society,” says Mike Vader, manager of Affirmative Action for the California State Personnel Board. “This country has a social responsibility to the handicapped, not as charity, but to give each disabled person the chance to become an integral part of society. There are many well equipped disabled persons who just need an opportunity,” he adds.

It is tragic when disabled persons overcome their personal handicaps only to be “crippled” by the negative attitudes of those who could hire them. It is hoped that through the Master Plan, increased contact between disabled and able-bodied persons will reduce the barriers of fear and mistrust that each group has for the other. When children can learn to joke and play unself-consciously with their handicapped peers, this attitude will spill over to parents and eventually to society as a whole. If that day ever arrives, the handicapped will have found their rightful place in a society that has too often neglected them in the past.

Appendix A



FEDERAL LAW: Education as a Birthright

It is the purpose of this Act to assure that all handicapped children have available to them . . . a free appropriate public education which emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs . . .

Education for
All Handicapped Children Act,
PL 94-142

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142) was passed by Congress on Nov. 29, 1975. It established the concept that all children, regardless of handicap, are entitled to a free public education appropriate to their needs. As defined in the law, "free public education" is schooling, provided at no charge to the parents, is under public supervision and is paid for with public funds. The education is "appropriate," according to the law, if the services conform to the recommendations of the child's individualized education program.

As with the California state law, free public education means that children referred to a private nonsectarian school by public school systems can have their room, board, tuition and transportation paid for with public funds. The quality of the child's education is protected by the condition that the private school must meet state standards before public funds may be used.

Who Is Handicapped?

Handicapped children, according to federal regulations, are those children who are evaluated as being mentally retarded, hard of hearing, deaf, speech impaired, visually handicapped, seriously emotionally disturbed, orthopedically impaired, other health impaired or learning disabled children who require special education and related services.

This federal definition of handicapped is more specific than the one used in California's Master Plan. California schools are required by the Master Plan to serve all children who have "a demonstrated handicap" or a disorder that requires special instruction beyond what can be provided in the regular classroom. Although more children are eligible for special education under the state law, the two laws are compatible.

Another distinction between the two laws is that federal funds can only pay for disabilities included in the federal definition. For example, the Master Plan requires

schools to serve drug dependent and pregnant pupils. Schools receive state funds, but not federal funds, for educating those students because their disabilities are not included in the federal definition of handicapped.

Federal Deadlines

PL 94-142 sets several deadlines for implementation. On Oct. 1, 1977, schools were required to start providing a "free and appropriate education" to all handicapped children who were already being served. That deadline also applied to provisions for an individualized education program, an effort to educate the child in the "least restrictive" educational environment, parent participation, nondiscriminatory testing and the right to appeal educational decisions.

Schools were required to serve all handicapped individuals between the ages of 4.9 and 18 after Sept. 1, 1978. Within two years by Sept. 1, 1980 all individuals ages 3 to 21 must be served. The law exempts states from serving those under age 6 and over age 17 if such a requirement would conflict with court orders, state law or practice.

California schools will ultimately serve all ages called for in PL 94-142, but the timetable will be different. The state required its schools to be serving all handicapped children in kindergarten through graduation from high school by Oct. 1, 1977. Schools are required to educate individuals ages 3 and 4 in certain programs, but only pupils requiring intensive service and only after the schools phase in the Master Plan. (Under the state's Assembly Bill 1250, schools will be phased into the Master Plan during the years 1978 to 1982.)

In order to encourage services for preschool children, PL 94-142 provides incentive grants to pay for services to children who are between 3 and 5 years of age. California allocated this money to local school districts, based on applications which describe the local program and the children to be served. This resource is in addition to state

preschool programs directed and funded by the State Department of Education's Office of Child Development.

Federal Priorities

In addition to the deadlines, Congress set two priorities for states and school districts. Federal funds should be used first to serve handicapped children who are receiving *no* education of any kind and second to serve the most severely handicapped within each disability who are receiving an "inadequate" education. The regulations describe an inadequately served child as one who receives some but not all of the services called for in the child's individualized education program. The deadline for compliance was Sept. 1, 1978.

A similar timetable applies to the individualized education program. For children not presently receiving special education services, a planning meeting must be scheduled within 30 school days of the child's identification as a handicapped person or within 30 school days of the start of school. Children already receiving special education must have a plan by the beginning of each school year.

The individualized education program (IEP) is developed in a meeting attended by the child's teacher, parents, a representative of the local educational agency and, when appropriate, the student. The IEP must contain:

- A statement of the student's present levels of educational performance.
- Annual goals and instructional objectives.
- The specific educational service needed and the extent the student will be able to participate in the regular program.
- The starting date and anticipated duration of special education services.
- The criteria and evaluation procedures to be used in determining whether the goals and objectives have been achieved.

Watch Those Tests

Both state and federal law reflect a concern that no child be erroneously placed in special education. There is a widespread belief that traditional intelligence tests are inaccurate measures for some children because the test's structure and content may be biased toward white, middle-class values and experiences.

In addition to cultural bias, some tests may be linguistically biased for a child whose parents speak a language other than English at home.

The state law prohibits the use of discriminatory tests, and the federal law spells out this taboo in detail:

- Tests and other assessment materials must be administered in the child's native language—unless it is clearly not feasible to do so.
- The assessment material should be validated for the specific purpose used, and it should be administered

by persons who meet applicable state certification or licensure requirements.

- The assessment should include tests tailored to measure specific areas of educational need. It should not be limited to those areas that measure a single general intelligence quotient (I.Q.).
- Schools should ensure that tests given to a child with impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills accurately reflect the skill or intelligence the test is intended to measure rather than the effect of the physical disability.
- No one test or type of test may be used as the sole criterion for placement.
- Placement decisions should be based on information in addition to test results, including the child's physical condition, socio-cultural background and behavior at home and at school. The weight given to each of these sources should be documented.
- The interpretation of the assessment and the subsequent placement of the child should be made by persons who are knowledgeable about the child, can interpret the assessment results and are aware of the placement options available to provide special education services.
- If assessments show the child does not need special services, the child must be returned to or remain in the regular classroom.

Full Educational Opportunity

A school district that provides excellent training in the basic skills might still discriminate against handicapped children if electives and extracurricular activities are not structured to permit their participation. To guard against this possible abuse, regulations for PL 94-142 call for local schools and each state to set timelines to allow each child full educational opportunity. This means "handicapped children must have available to them the variety of programs and services available to nonhandicapped children, including art, music, industrial arts, home economics and vocational education".

Nonacademic and extracurricular activities should be provided in a manner that provides equal access to all children. These activities include health services, athletics, recreational services, special interest groups or clubs sponsored by the state or school; student employment; and student referral to agencies that serve handicapped persons.

Least Restrictive Environment

To end segregation of exceptional individuals, PL 94-142 requires state education agencies to ensure that "to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children—including children in public or private institutions—are educated with children who are not handicapped."

In order to provide "appropriate" education, the law

requires states and school districts to offer a "continuum of alternative placements," including instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction and instruction in hospitals and institutions. The schools must also provide supplementary services, such as resource and itinerant teachers, to assist exceptional children assigned to regular programs.

Like California's Master Plan, PL 94-142 encourages contact between handicapped and nonhandicapped children when such interaction is in the best interest of both.

Staff Development

The staff development requirements of PL 94-142 are also compatible with the Master Plan. The federal law requires inservice training for general and special education teachers and support personnel and any other personnel "necessary to carry out the purposes of the act."

Each state education agency is required to survey annually the needs in the state to ensure that a sufficient number of adequately trained personnel are available. PL 94-142 also requires the state to ensure that training provided by educational agencies includes:

- The use of incentives which ensure participation by teachers (such as released time, payment for participation, options for academic credit, salary step credits or certification renewal).
- The involvement of local staff in the planning.
- The use of innovative practices that have been found to be effective.

The Master Plan requires each RLA to include staff development in its local comprehensive plan. By reviewing each local comprehensive plan, the state is able to ensure that local agencies meet the requirements of PL 94-142.

Safeguarding Pupil and Parent Rights

PL 94-142 specifies many rights that give parents an opportunity for meaningful participation in decisions regarding their child's education. First, parents must be given detailed, written notice any time the school plans to change or refuses to change the identification, assessment or educational placement of a handicapped child. The notice must be:

- Written in language understandable to the general public.
- Provided in the native language of the parent or other mode of communication used by the parent.
- Translated orally or by other means to the parent whose language or communication is not a written language.

The school district must obtain a written, informed and voluntary consent from the parent before the child may be assessed. The school is also obligated to inform

parents of their right to obtain an independent assessment and to have the results of the independent assessment considered in determining the child's placement. If parents disagree with the results of the school evaluation, they have a right to an independent assessment at public expense.

Schools may appeal the independent assessment request.

As in the Master Plan, PL 94-142 gives parents and pupils the right to appeal decisions on the following issues:

- Identification of the child as handicapped.
- Assessment of the pupil or implementation of the educational plan.
- The denial, placement, transfer or termination of the pupil in a special education program.

PL 94-142 specifies that hearing procedures are to be established by the state. Those procedures must allow the parent to appeal to the state education agency and to sue in civil court. The fair hearing panel created by the Master Plan satisfies these requirements of the federal law.

Confidentiality

PL 94-142 also protects the confidentiality of a student's school records. Parents have a right to inspect and obtain copies of any "personally identifiable" information about their child that is used by an educational agency in connection with the child's special education. The regulations define "personally identifiable" as information that includes: the name of the child or another family member; the child's address; an identifying number such as a social security number; or "a list of personal characteristics or other information which would make it possible to identify the child with reasonable certainty."

Agencies with such records must keep a log of those individuals who see the records, including the person's name, the date and the reason for seeing the records. The requirement does not apply to parents or to employees who work with the child. The agency must obtain permission from the parents before the records are shown to any persons not normally authorized to see them. A parent who believes part of the information is misleading or inaccurate may request the educational agency to amend the information. If the agency refuses to change it, the parent has the right to a hearing by the same educational agency. Unlike the other fair hearing procedures related to identification, assessment or instruction, the parent's right of appeal does not extend beyond the local school district.

The school district conducts a hearing to decide whether material in the child's records is misleading, inaccurate or in some way violates the privacy or other rights of the child. If the hearing decision is contrary to the opinion of the parents, they have the right to place a statement in the child's records, commenting on the

information or giving reasons for disagreeing with the decision of the school district.

The district is then obligated to maintain that statement as part of the file and show it, along with the other information, to anyone given access to the file.

Parent Participation

As in the state law, PL 94-142 contains provisions to encourage parent participation in placement meetings. The meetings should be scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time and place. If parents cannot attend the meeting, efforts should be made to include the parents through individual or conference telephone calls. If the parents refuse to attend, the schools should have a record of attempts to involve parents, such as a log of telephone calls, copies of correspondence and records of visits to the parent's home or place of employment.

Civil Rights for the Handicapped

The important rights outlined in the Education for All Handicapped Children Act are reinforced and broadened in another federal law, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. In addition to guaranteeing a free and appropriate public education, Section 504 requires agencies that receive federal funds to make their programs accessible to handicapped persons. The law also bars job discrimination based on a person's handicap.

According to HEW regulations signed May 4, 1977, a school is in compliance with the law if programs *as a whole* are accessible. For example, schools may reassign classes to an accessible building, redesign equipment or make aides available to help handicapped persons.

"Structural changes in existing facilities," the regulations said, "are required only where there is no other feasible way to make the . . . program accessible," the regulations read. If, however, an existing building is remodeled in some way that affects its usability, the alterations must be made to accommodate handicapped persons. Such alterations can include ramps, wider bathroom stalls, braille numbers in elevators, flashing red lights on fire alarms and lowered drinking fountains and telephones. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act authorizes the U.S. commissioner of education to make grants "to pay part or all the cost of altering existing materials and equipment." Congress, however, placed no deadline on this requirement and stipulated that "such sums as may be necessary" would be appropriated. To date, Congress has not appropriated such funds.

All new buildings constructed after May 4, 1977, must be barrier-free according to minimum standards set by the American National Standards Institute, Inc. Although many "scare stories" have been written about the excessive costs of this requirement, a 1975 study by the General Accounting Office estimated that eliminating barriers in new facilities could cost as little as one-tenth to

one-half of one percent of the total construction cost. Schools have three years to make structural changes in existing facilities, but they were required to spell out their intentions in a transition plan by Dec. 2, 1977.

The employment provision of the law requires schools to take "positive steps to employ and advance" handicapped persons. It also prohibits job discrimination against persons who with "reasonable accommodation" can perform the essential functions of the job. The Office of Civil Rights, which is charged with enforcing Section 504, says that the "positive steps" language does not require a formal affirmative action plan. However, if a complaint is received, the office will look at the pattern of employment practices. Thus, it behooves schools to seek out handicapped persons who may have been previously excluded.

"Reasonable accommodation" may entail hiring an aide for a blind teacher or providing special equipment. Under the regulations, drug addicts and alcoholics are included in the definition of handicapped. The appendix to the regulations adds, however, that drug addicts and alcoholics can be held to the same standard of performance as other job applicants, which means that past personnel records, unsatisfactory work performance and behavior may be considered.

To comply with Section 504, school districts must file an assurance form with the Office of Civil Rights which says they will meet the law's provisions. Districts were required to file a self-evaluation by May 1978 that was completed with the help of handicapped persons and organizations. This evaluation had to:

- Consider current policies and practices.
- Modify policies that conflict with the law.
- Describe any remedial steps necessary to eliminate the effects of past discrimination.

Educational agencies that employ more than 15 persons must designate an employee to handle complaints and must maintain a file on the self-evaluation process for three years.

Federal Funds

Federal funds provided by PL 94-142 may be used to pay only the excess cost of educating a handicapped child. They may not supplant money which has been contributed by the state or local school district. The federal law also stipulates that state and federal money may not be used to pay for services that are inferior to services given to nonhandicapped children in the district.

Federal money is allocated to each state based on the number of children, ages 3 to 21, who are receiving special education services. To guard against inflated counts, the state may not claim a number that is higher than 12 percent of the total number of children and young people in the state between the ages of 5 and 17. Similarly, the number of children designated learning disabled cannot exceed 2 percent of the number of school-aged

children. This 2 percent limitation may be removed in the future—pending definitions (by the federal government) of learning disabled.

Federal help—at least for the first three years—will not be overwhelming. Funding is based on a percentage of the average per pupil expenditure in elementary and secondary schools in the nation, multiplied by the number of children served in the state. The formula for authorized funding starts low and rises rapidly according to the following schedule:

5 percent in 1977-78.
10 percent in 1978-79.
20 percent in 1979-80.
30 percent in 1980-81.
40 percent in 1981-82
and every year thereafter.

Federal aid for the first year was \$68 per pupil. Fortunately for California school districts, the Master Plan legislation provides considerably more.

Appendix B

Glossary

Of State and Federal Special Education Terms

Assembly Bill 1250 (1977), as amended by AB 3635—

This law provides for statewide implementation of the California Master Plan for Special Education in California schools.

Assembly Bill 4040—The first Master Plan legislation enacted in 1974 that authorized three-year pilot programs in up to 10 areas of the state.

Community Advisory Committee (CAC)—A group of parents, community members and school staff that advises the responsible local agency (school district or county) in the development and implementation of the local comprehensive plan for special education. It also assists in parent education, review of programs and public involvement in the development of the comprehensive plan.

Comprehensive Plan for Special Education—A plan, developed by schools and the community, that describes how the responsible local agency will implement the California Master Plan for Special Education.

Designated Instruction and Services (DIS)—Instruction, therapy or related services that are unique and not usually taught by regular class, special class or resource specialist teachers. The services are made available to exceptional children on the basis of individual need.

Educational Assessment Service (EAS)—A team of full-time specialists representing health, psychology, social work, language, speech and hearing and special education administration. The specialists assess children and participate in placement meetings for children who are referred from the school appraisal team (SAT). The EAS is the only team that can refer a child to a special class, private school or state school.

Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)—A key provision of the federal Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142) that entitles handicapped children to schooling at no charge to their parents. The education must also be under public supervision, meet state standards and be appropriate to the child's needs.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)—A plan that describes the child's current abilities, sets annual goals and instructional objectives, and describes the education services needed to meet those goals and objectives.

Individuals with Exceptional Needs—The term used in the Master Plan for children eligible for special education. This umbrella term eliminates the need to give children medical labels.

Least Restrictive Educational Environment—A requirement in both state and federal laws that exceptional children be educated alongside nonhandicapped peers to the maximum extent appropriate to their needs. This requirement does not eliminate special classes or state schools, but it reserves these placement options for children who cannot function in regular classes.

Mainstreaming—A term in popular usage that refers to educating handicapped children in regular classes. In most cases, such children receive additional help.

Master Plan (California Master Plan for Special Education)—Approved in 1974, it establishes a comprehensive system for delivering special education services to exceptional children. It describes program components and creates the responsible local agency structure which moves key educational decisions from the state to the local level.

Program Specialist—A special education coordinator who has advanced training in one of the Master Plan instructional areas. The program specialist advises special class, resource specialist and DIS teachers; plans in-service training; supervises research; assesses programs; and coordinates curricula.

Public Law 94-142—the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. Passed by Congress in 1975, it guarantees a free and appropriate education to school-aged handicapped children by Oct. 1, 1977; to those ages 3 to 18 by Sept. 1, 1978; and to those 3 to 21 by Sept. 1, 1980.

Rehabilitation Act of 1973—Section 504 of this act contains the requirements of PL 94-142 (except the individual educational plan). It also requires that schools make their programs accessible to handicapped persons and prohibits job discrimination of the handicapped, including alcoholics and drug addicts. Schools that do not comply with Section 504 can lose all federal funds.

Resource Specialist—A new role created by the Master Plan for a person with advanced training in special education. Depending on the local comprehensive plan, the resource specialist can provide the

following: educational assessment of pupils, individual and small group instruction, developing instructional materials and teaching techniques for the classroom teacher, assessing pupil progress and coordinating recommendations in the child's individualized education program (IEP) with parents and teacher.

Responsible Local Agency (RLA)—An organizational unit, created by the Master Plan, that is fiscally and administratively responsible for special education services to children within a Special Education Service Region (SESR). An RLA may be a school district or county superintendent of schools office.

School Appraisal Team (SAT)—A group that meets in the local school to determine the educational needs and the individualized education program of a child. The group includes the school principal or other administrator, teachers or specialists who can help the child, the parents and others as necessary. The SAT can recommend placement in a regular class, DIS or resource specialist program. If more information is

needed or if more intensive help is indicated, the child is referred to the educational assessment service (EAS).

Special Day Class—A self-contained class that offers full-time instruction to children whose handicaps prevent them from participating in a regular class. Special centers are schools or part of a school with special day classes. In this report, the term special class has been used to refer to both special classes and centers.

Special Education Services Region (SESR)—The districts or districts and counties within a comprehensive plan; the area served by the plan.

State School for the Handicapped—A special school operated by the State Department of Education for the education of handicapped children including individual assessment services and the development of individualized education programs. State schools offer a wide range of curriculum, including career education.

California Master Plan Special Education Services Regions (SESRs)

Approved in 1975-1976

Contra Costa County
Humboldt-Del Norte Counties
Sacramento Unified
Santa Barbara County
Santa Monica Unified
Stanislaus County

Merced County
Riverside County
San Diego Unified
Santa Clara Zone 1
Santa Clara Zone 7
Santa Cruz/San Benito Counties

Approved in 1976-1977

Los Angeles Unified
San Juan Unified
Tulare County
Whittier Area Cooperative

Approved in 1979-1980

Butte County
Los Angeles Unified
Marin County
Orange Unified
San Bernardino West
Santa Clara Zone 2
West Orange County
West San Gabriel

Approved in 1978-1979

Fresno Unified
Glenn County

Other Publications Available from the State Department of Education

A New Era in Special Education: California's Master Plan in Action is one of approximately 400 publications that are available from the California State Department of Education. Some of the more recent publications or those most widely used are the following:

Administration of the School District Management Program (1977)	\$ 2.50
An Assessment of the Writing Performance of California High School Seniors (1977)	2.75
Attendance and Enrollment Accounting and Reporting (1977)	2.80
Bibliography of Instructional Materials for the Teaching of French (1977)	1.50
Bibliography of Instructional Materials for the Teaching of Portuguese (1976)	.85
Bicycle Rules of the Road in California (1977)	1.50
California Guide to Parent Participation in Driver Education (1978)	3.15
California Guide to Traffic Safety Education (1976)	3.50
California Master Plan for Special Education (1974)	1.00*
California Private School Directory, 1978	5.00
California Public School Directory, 1979	11.00
California Public Schools Selected Statistics, 1976-77 (1978)	1.00
California School Accounting Manual (1978)	1.65
California School Effectiveness Study (1977)	.85
California School Energy Concepts (1978)	.85
California Schools Beyond Serrano (1979)	.85
California Teachers Salaries and Salary Schedules, 1977-78 (1978)	10.00
Computers for Learning (1977)	1.25
Discussion Guide for the California School Improvement Program (1978)	1.50**
District Master Plan for School Improvement (1978)	1.50*
District Paid Insurance Programs in California School Districts, 1977-78 (1978)	2.50
English Language Framework for California Public Schools (1976)	1.50
Establishing School Site Councils. The California School Improvement Program (1977)	1.50**
Exemplary Programs in Special Education (1978)	.85
Genetic Conditions - A Resource Book and Instructional Guide (1977)	1.30
Guidance Services in Adult Education (1979)	2.25
Guide for Multicultural Education, Content and Context (1977)	1.25
Guide for Ongoing Planning (1977)	1.10
Handbook for Assessing an Elementary School Program (1978)	1.50*
Handbook for Reporting and Using Test Results (1976)	8.50
Handbook on Adult Education in California (1979)	2.50
A Handbook Regarding the Privacy and Disclosure of Pupil Records (1978)	.85
Health Instruction Framework for California Public Schools (1978)	1.35
Hospitality Occupations Curriculum Guide (1977)	3.00
Liability Insurance in California Public Schools (1978)	2.00
Needs Assessment in Adult Education Programs (1978)	1.75
Parents Can Be Partners (1978)	1.35*
Physical Education for Children, Ages Four Through Nine (1978)	2.50
Planning Handbook (1978)	1.50**
Publicizing Adult Education Programs (1978)	2.00
Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Integrated Educational Programs (1978)	2.60
Science Framework for California Public Schools (1978)	1.65
Site Management (1977)	1.50
Social Sciences Education Framework for California Public Schools (1975)	1.10
State Guidelines for School Athletic Programs (1978)	2.20
Students' Rights and Responsibilities Handbook (1978)	1.50**

Orders should be directed to:

California State Department of Education
P.O. Box 271
Sacramento, CA 95802

Remittance or purchase order must accompany order. Purchase orders without checks are accepted only from government agencies in California. Sales tax should be added to all orders from California purchasers.

A complete list of publications available from the Department may be obtained by writing to the address listed above.

* Also available in Spanish, at the price indicated

** Developed for implementation of AB 65