Perspectives on Programs and Services for Students with Emotional Disabilities

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Purpose

- Document the current status of services for students with emotional disabilities (ED) across the country.
- Document the current status of services for students with ED in Virginia and compare with the services across the country.
- Propose ways to improve outcomes for students with ED in Virginia.

Overview

U.S. Department of Education

- 416,000 teachers licensed to teach students with disabilities
- 6.5 million students with disabilities
- 475,000 students with emotional disabilities

Overview (Cont'd)

VA Department of Education

- 9,600 teachers licensed to teach students with disabilities
- 168,000 students with disabilities
- 11,000 students with emotional disabilities

Background

- Students with emotional disabilities are among the least likely to experience school success and the most likely to pose challenges to school personnel.
- The majority of students with emotional disabilities spend some time in the regular classroom.
- There is a growing list of evidence-based practices for intervening with students with emotional disabilities.
- Well-prepared and qualified teachers are the most important part of successful programs for students with emotional disabilities.

Objectives – School Personnel

Analyze the results of the surveys representing:

- importance of the services,
- use of the services, and
- how prepared school personnel are to provide the services.

Objectives – Parents

Analyze the results of the surveys of parents of students with emotional disabilities to obtain information on their perspectives on services for their sons/daughters.

Objectives – 50 States and Experts

- Analyze data from the state directors of special education to identify services and other state-level initiatives that are in place to provide appropriate services that lead to successful outcomes for students with ED.
- Obtain data from experts from the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders regarding promising practices for serving students with ED.

Survey Methodology

- The Virginia Department of Education provided a list of over 9,600 teachers serving students with ED, 132 Directors of Special Education, and 20 regional special education program directors.

- Additionally, 1,979 principals were sent surveys to distribute to general education teachers serving students with ED.

Survey Methodology (Cont'd)

- Parent surveys were mailed to the following to distribute to parents of students with ED:
  - Directors of Special Education - (132)
  - Parent Resource Center (PRC) Directors - (51)
  - Regional Representatives of the State Special Education Advisory Committee (SSEAC) - (8)
  - Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC) Executive Director

Survey Methodology (Cont'd)

- Building principals, directors of special education, and division superintendents were sent a pre-notification letter from the Assistant Superintendent of the VDOE informing them of the survey.
- The survey and cover letter were mailed within two weeks of the pre-notification letter.

Survey Methodology (Cont'd)

- The surveys had an identification number for tracking non-respondents and for disseminating a second survey to non-responding teachers with ED students and special education/regional program directors.
- Responses remained anonymous.

Survey Content

The survey consisted of items compiled from a review of the literature on evidence-based practices for students with emotional disabilities.

Survey Content

For a practice to be accepted as “evidence-based,” it must be: empirically validated, based on multiple studies that reflect sound experimental design and methodology. It must be proven effective in different settings. And, there must be evidence that the practice can be sustained across time.

Survey Participants

- Special Education Teachers (1472)
- General Education Teachers (1588)
- Directors of Special Education (132)
- Parents of students with ED (185)
- State Directors of Special Education (16)
- Experts in the field of ED (5)

All response rates were found sufficient for analyses.

Scoring Criterion

- Positive responses from at least 80% of the participants were identified as practices in common use.
- Positive responses from less than 40% of the participants were identified as practices not in common use.

Special Education & General Education Teachers – Use

Practices identified with at least 80% Usually/Always Use

Special Education Teachers

- **3** of **27** practices

General Education Teachers

- **3** of **27** practices

Special Education & General Education Teachers – Use

Practices Identified as Most Used

Special Education Teachers

- Clear rules/expectations
- Academic supports and curricular/instructional modifications
- A climate that supports successful teaching and learning

General Education Teachers

- Clear rules/expectations
- A climate that supports successful teaching and learning
- Academic supports and curricular/instructional modifications

Special Education & General Education Teachers – Use

Practices identified with less than 40% Usually/Always Use

Special Education Teachers

- **A program of peer-mediated intervention to promote positive behavior skills**
- **An anger management program**
- **Group-oriented contingency management**

Special Education & General Education Teachers – Use (Cont'd)

Practices identified with less than 40% Usually/Always Use

Special Education Teachers

- The use of peer-reinforcement to promote appropriate student behavior
- Peer assisted learning

Special Education & General Education Teachers – Use

Practices identified with less than 40% Usually/Always Use

General Education Teachers

- A program of peer-mediated intervention to promote positive behavior skills
- An anger management program
- Group-oriented contingency management

Special Education & General Education Teachers – Prepared to Implement

Practices identified with at least 80% Well /Very Well Prepared to Implement

Special Education Teachers

- **1** of **27** practices

General Education Teachers

- **1** of **27** practices

Special Education & General Education Teachers - Prepared to Implement

Practices identified as Best Prepared to Implement

Special Education Teachers

- Clear rules/expectations
- Academic supports and curricular/instructional modifications
- A climate that supports successful teaching and learning

General Education Teachers

- Clear rules/expectations
- A climate that supports successful teaching and learning
- Academic supports and curricular/instructional modifications

Special Education & General Education Teachers - Prepared to Implement

Practices identified with less than 40% Well/Very Well Prepared to Implement

Special Education Teachers

- A program of peer-mediated intervention to promote positive behavior skills
- A conflict resolution program
- An anger management program
- Group-oriented contingency management

Special Education & General Education Teachers - Prepared to Implement

Practices identified with less than 40% Well/Very Well Prepared to Implement

General Education Teachers

- **A program of peer-mediated intervention to promote positive behavior skills**
- **A conflict resolution program**
- **An anger management program**
- **Group-oriented contingency management**

Special Education & General Education Teachers - Prepared to Implement (Cont'd)

Practices identified with less than 40% Well/Very Well Prepared to Implement

General Education Teachers

- Instruction in self-monitoring of non-academic behavior
- A formal procedure to develop function-based intervention
- A systematic approach to data collection, graphing, and analysis for intervention plans

Special Education Directors – Prepared to Implement

Practices identified as Best Prepared to Implement

- Clear rules/expectations
- Academic supports and curricular/instructional modifications
- A climate that supports successful teaching and learning

Special Education Directors – Prepared to Implement

Practices identified with less than 40% Well /Very Well Prepared to Implement

- A program of peer-mediated intervention to promote positive behavior skills
- A conflict resolution program
- An anger management program

Special Education Directors – Prepared to Implement (Cont'd)

Practices identified with less than 40% Well /Very Well Prepared to Implement

- Social skills instruction taught as part of regular class instruction
- The use of peer-reinforcement to promote appropriate student behavior
- Instruction in self-monitoring of student academic performance

Special Education Directors – Prepared to Implement (Cont'd)

Practices identified with less than 40% Well/Very Well Prepared to Implement

- Instruction in self-monitoring of non-academic behavior
- A systematic approach to cooperative learning
- A systematic approach to data collection, graphing, and analysis for intervention plans
- Group-oriented contingency management
- Peer-assisted learning

Parent Survey Responses

Percentage of parents satisfied with:	N=185
The general condition of the school	91%
My involvement in developing goals and expectations for my son/daughter	89%
My part in writing my child's IEP	87%
The progress in making my child's school safe	85%
The overall quality of education being provided for my son/daughter	82%
How often schools shares information with me about my child's progress	79%

Parent Survey Responses (Cont'd)

Percentage of parents satisfied with:	N=185
My part in writing a Behavior Intervention Plan for my child	75%
The procedures were followed when seclusion is used with my son/daughter	70%
My child's progress in school subjects	69%
My child's progress in behavior	68%
The procedures were followed when physical restraint is used with my son/daughter	64%

Experts

Strongly Support:

- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- Response to Intervention (RtI)
- Mental Health Services (MHS)

Experts questioned the extent to which available evidence supports PBIS and RtI for students with emotional disabilities.

50 State Directors of Special Education

- 50 state Directors of Special Education were surveyed about initiatives in their state.
- 16 states responded to all or part of the survey.

50 State Directors of Special Education

Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS)

- 87.5% (n=14) reported implementing PBIS.
  - 64% (n=9) implementing in some schools
  - 29% (n=4) implementing in most schools
  - 7% (n = 1) implementing in almost all schools

50 State Directors of Special Education

Response to Intervention (RtI)

- 81.3% (n=13) reported implementing RtI.
  - 46.2% (n = 6) implementing in some schools
  - 15.4% (n = 2) implementing in most schools
  - 7.7% (n = 1) implementing in almost all schools
  - 30.8% (n = 4) didn't know

50 State Directors of Special Education

Mental Health Services (MHS)

- 31.3% (n=5) of state directors reported implementing Mental Health Services in their schools.
  - 40% (n=2) implementing in some schools
  - 40% (n=2) implementing in most schools
  - 20% (n=1) didn't know

50 State Directors of Special Education

Service Learning (SL)

- 75% (n=12) reported implementing SL.
  - 41.7 % (n=5) implementing in some schools
  - 25% (n=3) implementing in most schools
  - 8.3% (n=1) implementing in almost all schools
  - 25.2% (n=3) didn't know

50 State Directors of Special Education

Transition Programs (TPs)

- 81.3% (n=13) reported implementing TPs.
  - 15.4% (n=2) implementing in some schools
  - 15.4% (n=2) implementing in most schools
  - 53.8% (n=7) implementing in almost all schools

Physical Restraint

All teachers reported that physical restraint was never or seldom used. Only about 30% of teachers attached any importance to the use of physical restraint. Neither group reported that they were well prepared to use physical restraint. These findings are consistent with the strict guidelines for the use of physical restraint. Additional education regarding state guidelines may be warranted.

Seclusion

Neither teachers nor directors of special education attached any importance to seclusion and all groups reported that seclusion was never or seldom used. These findings are consistent with state and national prohibition of the use of seclusion in schools.

Mental Health in Schools

Approximately 30% of all respondents supported providing mental health services—as appropriate. Given that 1 in 10 students suffer serious enough mental health problems to negatively affect daily living, additional education regarding warning signs and exploration of collaborative mental health services and supports linked to the culture of the community may be warranted.

General Recommendations

- Infuse targeted evidence-based practices into content of special education teacher preparation.
- Infuse targeted evidence-based practices into content of general education teacher preparation.
- Infuse targeted evidence-based practices into content of in-service professional development.

General Recommendations (Cont'd)

- Encourage dialogue between school personnel and community mental health providers.
- Examine level of communication with parents regarding school/classroom practices.

General Recommendations (Cont'd)

- Teacher evidence-based practices to mastery.
- Facilitate skill transfer—with fidelity, to classroom settings.
- Create "contextual fit" so that evidence-based practices become part of the school culture.

Announcements

- 11:45-12:30 – Breakout Sessions
- Please take your belongings with you to your breakout session.
- 12:45-2:00 – Lunch in the Ballroom