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Implementing RSDS

State of the Art Survey Summaries

Building Assistance Teams
Report #11

District and Building Plans
Report #6

Collaboration
Report #14

Problem Solving Approach
Report #10

Maintaining and Reintegrating Students in the Neighborhood School
Report #13

Outcome Criteria
Report #15

Parent Involvement
Report #16

Pre-referral Interventions
Report #17

Progress Monitoring
Report #18

Staff Development
Report #19

Transition
Report #20

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Preface

Implementing RSDS: State of the Art Survey Summaries 1992 provides an overview of selected practices being implemented by educators as part of Iowa's Renewed Service Delivery System (RSDS). The eleven reports contained in this document reflect the experiences of educators interviewed about the use of innovations such as implementing progress monitoring, writing building plans and teaching collaboratively. Each paper includes a discussion of the demographics and study findings. This collection seeks to give the reader a glimpse of the nature and variety of educational reform in special education occurring under the umbrella of RSDS. Its objective is to help the reader become familiar with the extent of implementation as well as consideration for best practices and future directions proposed by these Iowa educators.

Gratitude is expressed to all who have been part of Iowa's RSDS. It would be impossible to express all indebtedness, but for assisting with this study we would like to thank all respondents, Directors of Special Education, and members of the Bureau of Special Education for their participation and assistance. Special thanks go to Tammie Adkins for her contributions to the editing of this volume.

Jim Clark
Gerry Gritzmacher
Jeff Grimes
Jim Reese
Pat Sitlington

Summary: State of the Art Survey

District and Building Plans

**Renewed Service Delivery System (RSDS)
Research Report #6**

Glenn Grove, Director of Special Education, Loess Hills AEA 13
Jeananne Hagen, Assistant Chief, Bureau of Special Education
Jeff Grimes, Consultant, Bureau of Special Education

Iowa Department of Education

January 1992

Acknowledgments

Appreciation is expressed to the AEA Directors of Special Education who designated the AEA staff members to respond to the District and Building Plan survey and for identifying innovators in Iowa schools that have experience with the RSDS district and building planning process. Both groups are identified below.

Area Education Agency Personnel Interviews

John McClure	Keystone Area Education Agency 1
Irene Koster	Northern Trails Area Education Agency 2
Carolyn Kruger	Lakeland Area Education Agency 3
Marv Shannon	Area Education Agency 4
Beverly Fisher	Arrowhead Area Education Agency 5
Karen Christensen	Area Education Agency 6
Jim Reed	Area Education Agency 7
Ed Hunt	Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency 9
Kathleen Aller	Grant Wood Area Education Agency 10
Linda Holloway	Heartland Area Education Agency 11
Jerry Brown	Western Hills Area Education Agency 12
Cal Sinn	Loess Hills Area Education Agency 13
Bill Marks	Southern Prairie Area Education Agency 15
Ed Longanecker	Great River Area Education Agency 16

Iowa School Personnel Interviews

Gina Anderson	Special education teacher, Junior/Senior High, New London
Bruce Amendt	Principal, Lucia Elementary, Algona
Steve Gray	Principal, South Hamilton Middle/High School, South Hamilton
Ester Hackett	Special education teacher, Duncombe Elementary, Fort Dodge
Sue Lamb	Special education teacher, Glick Elementary School, Marshalltown
Bill McCullough	Principal, Duncombe Elementary, Fort Dodge
Randy Nemitz	Principal, Clark Elementary, New London
Richard Nervig	Principal, Spirit Lake Elementary, Spirit Lake
Terri Parker	Special education teacher, Duncombe Elementary, Fort Dodge
Kim Pelzer	Second grade teacher, Glick Elementary School, Marshalltown
Anna Schaub	Special Education teacher, Douma Elementary, Ottumwa
Doug Smith	Principal, Bloomer Elementary, Council Bluffs
Jerry Zesiger	Principal, Douma Elementary, Ottumwa

We appreciate the assistance of all of the professionals identified above who shared their time, opinions and viewpoints about RSDS. We hope this report proves helpful to Iowa educators as we expand our understanding of how to effectively implement educational innovations designed to assist students in achieving maximum benefit from their school experience.

G.G., J.H., & J.G.

Summary: State of the Art Survey District and Building Plans

The Renewed Service Delivery System (RSDS) includes an improvement area related to the development of district and building plans, stated in the following manner:

District/Building Plan Students will benefit from better coordination and utilization of current instructional and support service personnel. This can be done in a prescriptive manner through the establishment of local building plans.

This report describes the innovative efforts with building plans that Iowa educators have experienced. Information in the report is the summary of 27 interviews: 14 area education agency (AEA) personnel and 13 local education agency (LEA) personnel (from eight different AEAs). Respondents were chosen by AEA Directors of Special Education. AEA respondents were sent a copy of the survey in advance to prepare for the interview.

Information is organized into five major sections: (a) Development of district and building plans, (b) Management of plans, (c) Outcome of plans, (d) Best practices, and (e) Future actions.

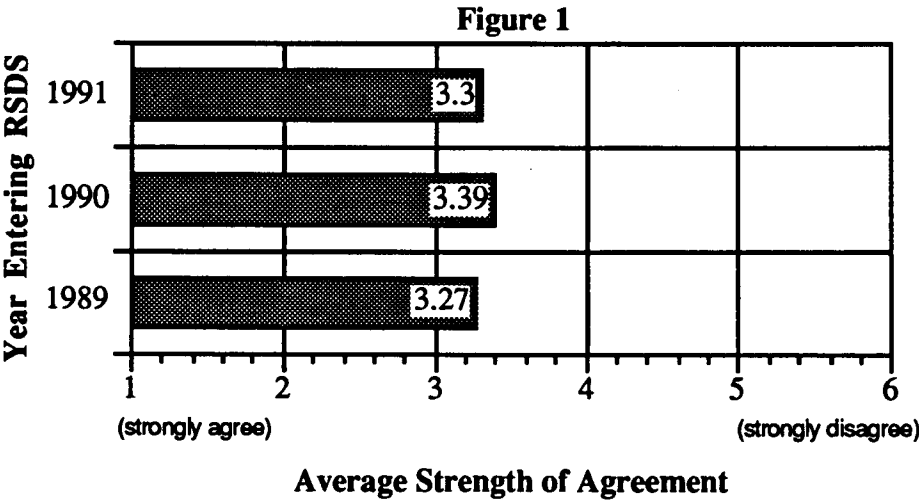
A. Development of District and Building Plans

1. **Building plans are a part of every AEA trial site's effort.** Local school representatives view the plan as a valuable tool for describing how resources are organized and utilized in alternative ways to meet the needs of students with learning and behavioral difficulties.
2. **AEAs place greater emphasis on the development of building plans than on district plans.** In smaller districts, the building plan and the district plan may be one and the same.
3. **Special education teachers, AEA support staff, general education teachers, principals, parents, guidance counselors and others (students, nurses, etc. . . .)** are generally the people involved in the development of the building plan.
4. **The RSDS planning process supports site-based management.** Forty-two percent of the AEAs indicated that the district's mission statement or policies influenced the building plans. Further, 70% of the AEAs indicated that the district's mission statement is the driving force for developing the building plan. All AEAs indicated that the building plans were not identical; they were individualized, which represents the uniqueness of each building's situation. No pattern was suggested by respondents to indicate that larger school districts manage the development of building plans differently than smaller school districts. Some districts, such as Fort Dodge, have given school personnel the freedom to design their building plan in a manner that best serves their unique population.
5. **Special education teachers and principals are viewed as being the key personnel in the successful development of the building plan.** These people were viewed as the "moving forces" who kept the effort focused on a final product. Special education teachers were often emphasized as crucial in the process of achieving the final plan, whereas administrators provide support and encouragement. The

principal also provides direction for staff development to convey information about the building plan process and content of the building plan.

6. **Completeness is the characteristic which separates exemplary building plans from other plans.** Exemplary plans were viewed as comprehensive, detailed and thoughtfully organized, often including information about parental involvement, staff development activities, evaluation criterion and timelines for implementation.
7. **Formal needs assessments were part of the building plan process in four AEAs.** Responses also indicate that trial sites entering RSDS in 1989 were less likely to utilize needs assessment procedures compared to those who entered later.
8. **There is an overt effort by the AEAs (85%) to promote the blending of school programs and services into one comprehensive plan.** Areas most frequently indicated to be currently included in a comprehensive plan are: special education, students at risk, AEA support services, LEA support services, all at 100%, and Chapter 1 programs, at 93%, of the time. To a lesser degree, talented and gifted (TAG), English as a second language (ESL), and other remedial programs may be included in the plan. Interviews with LEA personnel indicated, with remarkable consistency, that the Chapter 1 services were the most difficult to blend into a comprehensive concept of student services because of the interpretation of regulations related to this program. This was considered to be a major frustration and limitation for those planning site-based management oriented activities. The baseline research collected in 13 AEAs indicated blending Chapter 1 and special education resources was an infrequent occurrence prior to beginning RSDS, and there appears to be little progress achieved to date.

Figure 1 presents data from the Perception Study involving all AEA special education administrative and support staff and a random sample of LEA general and special education administrators and teachers in RSDS trial site schools. Respondents were asked whether they agreed with the statement, "Increased coordination and cooperation among programs such as Chapter 1 and special education has occurred through RSDS." Agreement was indicated.



9. **When parents are involved in the building plan process, they are considered to be equal partners (62%) in the process and are used for more than just reacting to products developed by others.** For parents not directly involved in the process, the most likely way they would learn of the development of a building plan is through mass media efforts such as newsletters, the board of education or PTA. The most distinctive effort to communicate with parents through mass media appears to be in AEA 12, where they have developed prototype articles for school newsletters and sample letters for parents indicating that a building plan had been developed in their school.

10. **Written quality standards were indicated to be used by 57% of the AEAs when reviewing the building plans.** The most common procedure for this review was an appraisal of the presence of the required components of a plan. No AEA indicated they had developed an innovation configuration for building plans, although some indicated this was an idea worth considering.

B. Management of District and Building Plans

11. **Most AEAs (eight) indicated that building plans should be revised on an annual basis.** Interviews with local school personnel supported this opinion. "The plan" is viewed as a fluid concept that needs to be adjusted to accommodate shifts in student needs, expertise of personnel serving the student population, and priorities of the agency.
12. **The AEAs' compliance review of LEAs and the development of building plans is currently considered as two independent events by 71% of AEAs.** However, 41% of the AEAs indicated that the building plans are reviewed at the time of a compliance visit, for informational purposes rather than for compliance considerations.
13. **RSDS funds were used by 71% of the trial site AEAs to support LEA activities in RSDS.** Examples of these activities include the use of funds to support teacher substitutes and to pay for participation in special activities, staff development activities and special projects at the building level.
14. **The local board of education's involvement with building plans was indicated to be one of three activities:** one, receiving an informational copy of the plan; two, formally approving the plan; and three, not being informed at all that there is an RSDS plan. Interviews with local school personnel reflected this range of options. For example, a presentation was made by special education teachers to the board of the New London School District. Other districts report that their board had no awareness of the specifics of the plans.
15. **Ninety-three percent of the AEAs approved the building plans.** One AEA reported that the building plans are not approved by the AEA.
16. **Building plan documents are maintained by all AEAs.** The most frequent location for these documents was the main AEA office (93%) as well as the branch office (42%). Only two AEAs (14%) indicated they provided copies of the building plans to the AEA support service personnel. Support service personnel would have access to the plans in the main office or branch office.
17. **It was the perception of 75% of the AEAs that efforts were occurring to integrate services at the building level between special education, students at risk and Chapter 1.** However, there was no indication of a school district or building that had developed exemplary accounting procedures for allocating the funding sources according to activities. There continues to be concern about how to manage Chapter 1 involvement and account for an appropriate audit trail. Because of the concern, schools are thwarted from attempting any effort to modify services to meet identified student needs.
18. **AEAs (67%) perceive a shared responsibility with LEAs after the building plan is approved.** Several districts indicated that the AEA staff was involved in new ways in their schools with increased involvement on prevention activities, speech services in general education classes, social skills training, problem-solving consultation within general education, and other ways.

C. Outcomes of District and Building Plans

19. The benefits of an effective building plan were projected as a set of observable events. It is a worthy question: If these are, in fact, the expected outcomes, isn't this process worth the significant effort required to make district and building plans a successful component of Iowa's educational experience? The comments from AEA personnel focused on several themes listed below. The LEA personnel interviewed supported the same general themes.

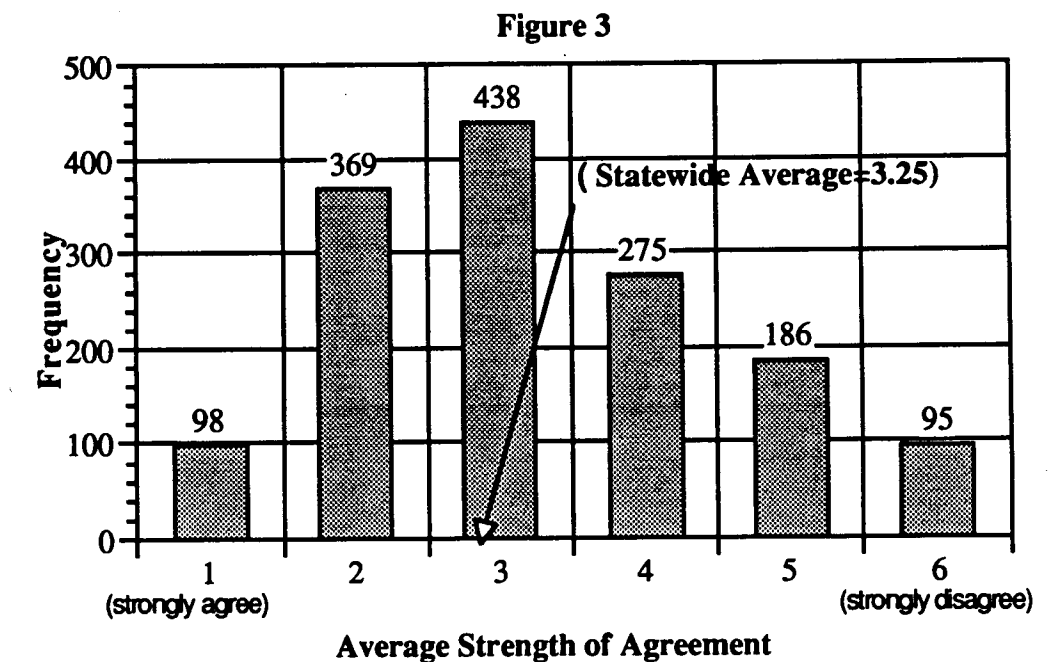
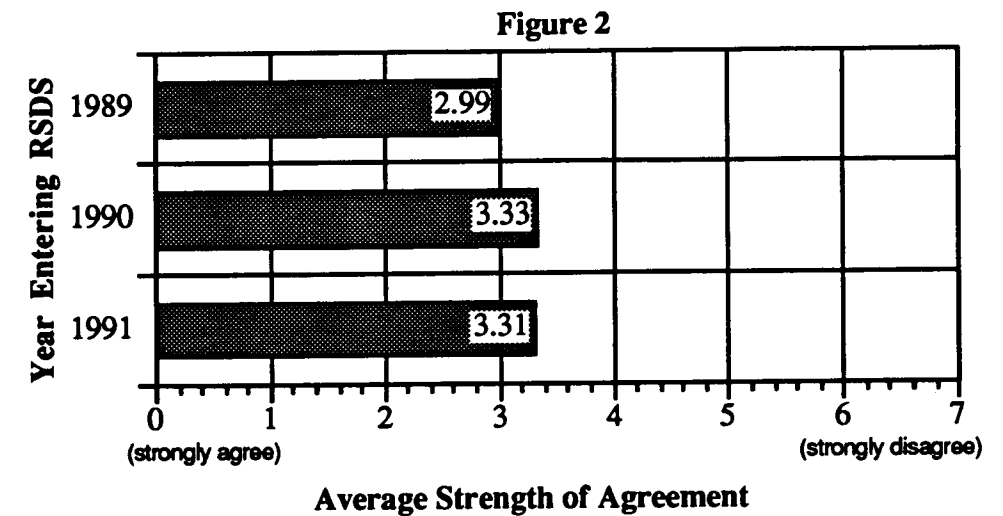
- Administrators, general education and special education teachers are knowledgeable about services for all students. There is an increased ownership and sense of responsibility for all students.
- Cooperation, collaboration and co-teaching of general and special education teachers occurs in the building. Innovative accommodations are occurring for students with challenging behavior and learning patterns.
- The problem-solving process is evident in how educators cope with students' difficulties. Problems are defined, progress monitoring occurs and outcomes are assessed.
- A wider range of options and interventions is provided for students with diverse needs.
- Quality staff development is provided to extend the knowledge base and instructional skills of staff.
- Interventions are provided earlier for students with educational needs. Students will show positive self-esteem and improved adjustment.

20. The effectiveness of building plans for integrating services was rated by the AEA representative at an overall average of 3.3 on the following scale, with seven AEAs providing ratings. Most trial sites that began in 1991 did not attempt to estimate the effectiveness of building plans since this process was just being organized in those sites.

Highly Effective	(Avg. 3.3)	Highly Ineffective
5	4 3 2 1	

21. Accountability procedures involving building administrators communicating with the district superintendent regarding the accomplishments of the plan were indicated to occur in 29% of the AEAs. The majority of the AEAs (64%) indicated they were unaware if this communication occurred.
22. Local school personnel indicate strong support for RSDS and indicate that they would not go back to the way services were provided before RSDS. They acknowledge that there is considerable refinement needed but the direction of the overall effort is in the best interest of students and school faculty.
23. Special education teachers interviewed stated that they felt they have job security despite the changes involved in RSDS.
24. Sixty-three percent of respondents stated that building plans improve services. Figure 2 shows the strength of agreement by RSDS entry date. These data are from the Perception Study involving all AEA special education administrative and support staff and a random sample of LEA general and special education administrators and teachers in RSDS trial site schools. The arithmetic average of this scale is 3.5. The lower the value, the greater the agreement with the statement ("do building plans improve services?"). The three groups include instructional, support and administrative personnel. Those respondents who are in their third year of RSDS (began in 1989) include 322 individuals; those in the second year in RSDS (began in 1990) include 626 individuals and those

beginning in 1991 include 395 individuals. The distribution of ratings is shown in figure 3. Overall, 63 % of those responding agreed with the statement.



D. Best Practices

1. **Philosophical foundation for building plans.** Building plans are designed to integrate and to focus all the building resources for the purpose of ensuring success for all learners. The plan must be

developed by a representative group of individuals from all aspects of the building's educational programs and services, parents and administrators. The building plan development must result in an integration of building support services and programs, such as special education, students at risk, Chapter 1, and others, to promote and achieve a blending of school resources to ensure that needs of learners are met.

The plan should promote teamwork between the staff, students, and parents to improve the concepts of (1) intervention options, (2) progress monitoring of efforts, (3) problem-solving methods to address learner needs, and (4) flexibility to react to changing needs and demographics.

The building plan must focus on quality programming and involve all aspects of the delivery system. The building plan is a vehicle to transform the delivery of services from a categorical delivery system to a unified, focused, and efficient system of meeting student needs, where staff, parents and students see intervention as a collective responsibility rather than someone else's.

2. **Content of building plans.** If building plans are to focus the entire resources of the building toward success of all learners, then the content of the plan must be comprehensive in nature.

- a. **Mission statement.** A quality building plan will focus on the mission of the building by integrating the existing or newly created resources to meet all students' needs. The individual building plan should relate to the district's efforts of transformation and be seen as one component of a system-wide change process.
- b. **Planned outcomes.** The building plan must reinforce desired outcomes to be attained by students attending their program. The plan must state goals in a manner that staff, parents, and students are clearly aware of the expectations within the building. The building plan will identify how resources of the school, parents, and students will be integrated to achieve the school's mission.
- c. **Staff development.** The plan must include a comprehensive staff development component to ensure staff members have the skills to deliver programs appropriately. This staff development initiative should be part of the district staff development program rather than a separate entity, with individual aspects of the building plan receiving appropriate attention.
- d. **Problem-resolution process.** The building plan must contain a problem-resolution process to allow for solutions to individual student, teacher, or parent concerns and needs. This process must focus on identifying problems, seeking solutions, and focusing building resources on resolution. This process considers provisions for prevention, remediation, developmental needs and maintenance of behavior change.
- e. **Self-monitoring process.** The plan shall have a self-monitoring component which allows for the adjustment of process and procedures to respond to changing building environments. The plan should require periodic review, adjustment, and specifically outlined measurement procedures to provide data to drive decision-making for adjustments.
- f. **Parental involvement.** The coordination of building resources must result in increased intervention options, less categorical or departmental programs, and must raise the expectations for all students within the building. The building plan must provide for increased parental involvement within the educational process to involve parents as partners in ensuring success for their students.
- g. **Transition.** The plan should focus on prevention of student failure and address naturally occurring transition points that often cause students to be less successful in new environments.

3. **Review, approval and evaluation of building plans.** The creators of building plans benefit from feedback and support in their efforts to formulate a meaningful design. Consequently, an approval and evaluation component is important in how these plans are managed.

- a. **Approval.** Building plans are reviewed and approved by the appropriate educational personnel in the districts and, for services to students with disabilities, the AEA special education director, as a means to ensure that the proposed service delivery model is consistent with (a) due process guarantees, (b) utilization of AEA personnel consistent with the expertise of professionals, (c) essential components are present in the plan, and (d) outcome measures appropriate to the plan's purpose.
- b. **Evaluation of plans.** Building plans will be evaluated to determine the impact on student performance and consumer satisfaction. The AEA will collect and synthesize the information from buildings' self-evaluation efforts.

E. Future Actions

The proposed best practices, once established, must have a total educational focus. Consequently, several actions are planned.

1. **Educational standard.** With the completion of this report, the Department of Education will be asked to initiate efforts to establish an educational standard related to the use of building plans for all Iowa schools. This will provide a foundation for institutionalizing the building plan concepts within a framework of total education.
2. **Establish a task force.** A task force consisting of AEA and Department of Education representatives will be established to review the implementation of best practice recommendations for building plans. By February 1993, the task force, consisting of one representative from each participating trial site AEA, will be responsible for (1) collecting information related to the implementation of the building plan recommendations in this report, (2) reviewing data, (3) drawing conclusions, (4) refining the best practice statements, and (5) formulating a position statement for consideration by the AEA Directors of Special Education and Bureau of Special Education administrative representatives regarding future actions with building plans in Iowa schools. The RSDS research team will assist the task force if requested.
3. **Pilot project.** The Department of Education will be asked to initiate a pilot project, during the 1992-93 school year, to actively explore the effectiveness of comprehensive planning that integrates RSDS, At Risk, Chapter 1, and other special programs. A status report of this effort will be completed by February 1993.

***Summary:
State of the Art Survey***

Problem-Solving Approach

**Renewed Service Delivery System (RSDS)
*Research Report #10***

**Marvin Lewis, Director of Special Education, Area Education Agency 6
Deb Hansen, Consultant, Bureau of Special Education
Jeff Grimes, Consultant, Bureau of Special Education**

Iowa Department of Education

February 1992

Acknowledgments

Appreciation is expressed to the AEA Directors of Special Education who designated the AEA staff members to respond to the Problem Solving Approach survey.

Area Education Agency Personnel Interviews

Bruce Jensen	Northern Trails Area Education Agency 2
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We appreciate the assistance of the professionals identified above who shared their time, opinions and viewpoints about RSDS. We hope this report proves helpful to Iowa educators as we expand our understanding of how to effectively implement educational innovations designed to assist students in achieving maximum benefit from their school experience.

M.L., D.H., & J.G.

Summary: State of the Art Survey Problem-Solving Approach

The Renewed Service Delivery System (RSDS) includes an improvement area related to the use of the problem-solving approach (PSA). The process is an umbrella process which includes the four performance areas: functional assessment, development of intervention, direct and frequent progress monitoring and outcome criteria.

This report describes the innovative efforts Iowa educators have experienced when implementing the PSA. Information in the report is the summary of 13 interviews with representatives of the area education agencies (AEAs). Respondents were chosen by AEA Directors of Special Education. AEA respondents were sent a copy of the survey in advance to prepare for the interview. Interviews were conducted over the phone.

Information is organized into six major sections: (a) Defining and describing the problem-solving model, (b) Training and dissemination, (c) Implementation of a problem-solving approach, (d) Perceptions of effectiveness and barriers, (e) Best practices, and (f) Future actions.

A. Defining and Describing the Problem Solving Model

- 1. Terminology.** There is a need for agreement on language within an AEA to facilitate communication between professionals. AEA representatives were asked how terminology related to the problem-solving approach was defined in their AEA's literature. The survey asked whether the following terms were defined in AEA material: "problem-solving assessment or functional assessment," "behavior of concern," "intervention," "progress monitoring," and "outcome criteria or exit criteria." The interviews demonstrate that every AEA has established and defined its own terminology. Most AEAs have defined these terms, although the manner in which definitions appeared varied; i.e., defined as a word, defined by example, defined by process or use.
- 2. Theoretical influences.** The survey asked, "What literature (author, article, chapter or book) best describes the process or model for problem-solving assessment adopted by the AEA?" Stan Deno, Suzanne Robinson, Mark Shinn, Judy Woods, Lynn Fuchs, Janet Graden, George Batsche, Howard Knoff, Joe Ulman, Jack Bergan, Julie Schendel (Coordinating Council on the Assessment of Student Performance [CCASP] material) and Chalfant were the people identified who provided models for the PSA process.
- 3. Question- and hypothesis-oriented assessment.** AEA responses indicated that a question orientation was established in formulating assessment strategies, but hypotheses are less evident in the AEA's approach at the present time.

B. Training and Dissemination

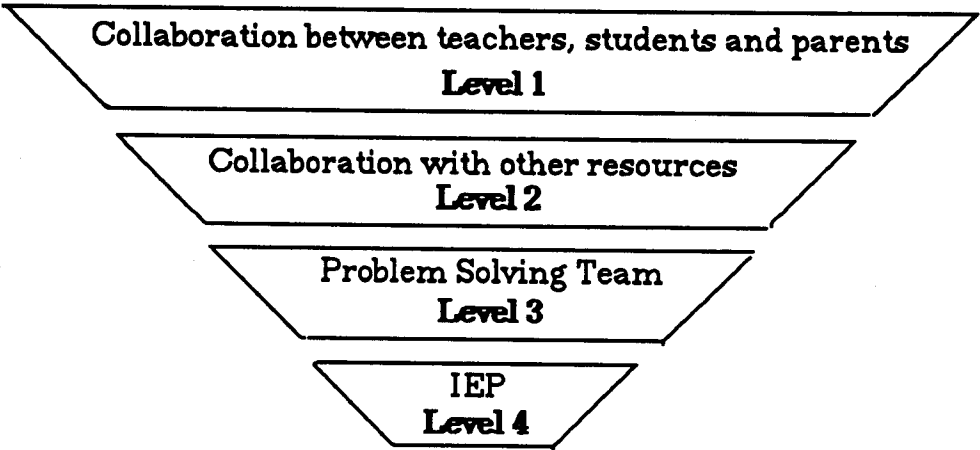
- 4. PSA manual.** Survey results indicated that 10 out of 13 AEAs have manuals that provide a structure for implementing a PSA process in RSDS trial sites.

5. **PSA materials distribution.** Materials related to the problem-solving process developed by the Department of Education have been distributed to AEA staff and working committees within the AEA. This material is not always disseminated to LEA staff. However, responses indicated that local education agency (LEA) staff members are most likely to receive material describing the problem-solving process through AEA-sponsored inservice and related materials.
6. **Staff development.** A plan to train new staff is often lacking, or it is delegated to discipline supervisors to offer instruction to new staff; but there is no integrated process. Some AEAs are still grappling with the definition. The personnel interviewed felt that methods for training new LEA staff need improvement. This lack of definition appeared to be the barrier to any future training effort.
7. **Innovation configuration.** Three AEAs (6, 11 and 13) have developed innovation configurations related to the components of the problem-solving procedure. These include topics such as identifying target behaviors, generating hypotheses, exploring intervention options, implementing action plans, and progress monitoring.

C. Implementation

8. **Levels of PSA.** Problem solving can be conceptualized as occurring on four levels, which are depicted in the figure below. Each level represents a different intensity of intervention. A brief description of the four levels follows.

Level 1 is problem-solving that occurs in the classroom where a teacher, parents and student attempt to resolve a student's difficulties.
Level 2 is often equated with the building assistance team where a teacher collaborates with colleagues in an effort to resolve a student's difficulties.
Level 3 is where a problem-solving team becomes involved with AEA support service expertise being utilized in the design of an intervention plan (I-plan) to resolve the student's difficulty.
Level 4 is the problem-solving effort which might lead to the development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP.)



All AEAs have Levels 1 and 4 to some degree. There was a sense that Level 1 should receive more attention. Levels 2 and 3 may be combined and differed within the AEAs as to whether LEA staff members are involved in their Building Assistance Team (BAT). AEA 11 is one agency that selectively includes support staff from BATs (Level 2) when their assistance is needed.

9. **Participants across levels.** The survey of AEAs indicated that Level 1 typically involves the teacher, parent, student (most likely at the secondary level) and often the principal. Most AEAs involve parents beginning in Levels 1 and 2. AEA staff members become increasingly involved over Levels 2, 3 and 4. Level 4 may involve all LEA and AEA disciplines needed.
10. **Communication for assessment and intervention.** Communication with parents becomes increasingly formal across the four levels. The building plan seems to be the main determiner of the manner of communication with parents at Levels 1, 2 and 3. Formal due process procedures with written consent are secured prior to Level 4.
11. **PSA protocol.** The concept of the problem-solving method as an alternative to the traditional assessment approach has been discussed within the RSDS literature. One approach to supporting special education decisions was the use of a protocol with selected questions considered pivotal to the determination of special education needs. Some AEAs (5 and 13) have used the problem-solving protocol and some AEAs (e.g., AEA 11) have integrated the concepts into their paperwork.
12. **Re-evaluations and PSA.** Four AEAs (2, 6, 7, and 11) report using a problem-solving approach for re-evaluations. All others indicate that they are using a traditional approach for re-evaluation at this time.
13. **Assignment of staff to LEAs.** Most AEAs have assigned support staff uniformly to buildings as a team. Some AEAs (e.g., AEA 6) have a support service staff member designated representative to that building. This professional spends the majority of his or her time in a building and is on-call to other buildings as needed.
14. **Recordkeeping.** Sixty-two percent of the AEAs indicated their report-writing procedures or methods of documenting assessments have changed as a result of RSDS. Likewise, in 46 percent of the AEAs the paper trail has changed to accommodate the problem-solving approach.
15. **Staff evaluation.** Two AEAs (2 and 11) indicated that staff evaluation included consideration of problem-solving activities as part of the staff evaluation activities. Most AEAs indicated that problem solving was considered important, but it is not a consideration in personnel assessments.
16. **Assessment.** Respondents indicated that they perceived a change in assessment practices in their agency as a result of RSDS being implemented. The following items summarize the responses to the question, "What assessment activities have happened more often as a result of implementing RSDS concepts?"
 - More progress monitoring, observation, problem solving, and use of curriculum based measurement is being practiced.
 - Intervention is occurring earlier.
 - More collaboration and interaction among professionals is occurring.

The most frequently cited assessment activity that has happened less often as a result of implementing RSDS concepts is less testing, including standardized testing, I.Q. testing, pre-post testing, and batteries.
17. **Intervention.** Respondents indicated that they perceived a change in intervention practices in their agency as a result of RSDS being implemented. The most frequently cited intervention activities that have happened more often as a result of implementing RSDS concepts include:
 - More teaming, interaction, consultation, and collaboration among teachers.
 - More prereferral intervention.
 - Interventions were described as more tailored to the classroom and to student need.

Responses suggest the following themes regarding intervention practices that were happening less often as a result of RSDS being implemented:

- Less categorical placement.
- Less pull-out programming.

D. Perceptions of Effectiveness and Barriers

18. **Primary measures of effectiveness.** When asked the question, "What would you consider to be primary measures of effectiveness of an educational unit that envisioned itself as a problem-solving system?" most AEAs responded that improved student outcomes, reduction in presenting problem or concern, or problem resolution would be the appropriate measures for a problem-solving system. A very straightforward viewpoint is that an effective system is one that solves problems. Therefore, the index of success for the system is the extent to which problems become resolved as a result of educational interventions.
19. **Consumer satisfaction.** The AEAs did not have formal procedures for specifically assessing consumer satisfaction with the problem-solving approach. AEAs do utilize various mechanisms for soliciting general feedback on the relationship between LEAs and AEAs which include administrators' meetings, advisory group meetings and feedback from visitations at school buildings in conjunction with AEA compliance reviews.
20. **Barriers and solutions.** When asked to list barriers and solutions for the barriers, AEA representatives' comments focused on several themes.

Barrier	Solutions
Lack of time and staff.	Use aides, volunteers, and peers. Effective use of peer tutoring and volunteers. Use teachers, administrators and principal to help teachers.
Lack of funds and resources. Chapter 1 and others' ability to work together.	Do not know. Block grant with protections to insure services.
Resistance to change, mindset.	Demonstrate alternatives. Staff development.
Difficult to provide training. Need for more staff development.	Do not know. Provide more staff development in the LEA.

E. Best Practices

The Renewed Service Delivery System (RSDS) includes an improvement area related to the use of the problem-solving approach (PSA). PSA is subsumed under four improvement areas: functional assessment, development of intervention, direct and frequent progress monitoring, and outcome criteria.

There is not a single problem-solving approach model. There are several models that have been developed with slightly different elements. It is appropriate for each area education agency to develop an appropriate problem-solving approach for the AEA and the schools served. The purpose of PSA is to provide a process which enables parents and educators to identify student needs and develop interventions that enable students to be successful.

PSA is a process to use in meeting the needs of all students regardless of age. The process can be applied at any level of programming or service, from the provision of accommodations in the general education classroom to providing interventions in a traditional special education setting.

Establishing a PSA Model Based on Established Practices. Each area education agency needs to define a specific problem-solving approach that will be used. This will enable personnel to use the same language, which will facilitate communication and the acquisition of skills necessary to effectively use the specific procedures for the delivery of special education services. The model needs to be based on established models which have proven to be effective.

Each AEA, in conjunction with the LEA, needs to use established practices as a basis for developing their unique model. There is extensive work which has been done in this area. The AEAs and local schools have many resources to use in developing a model.

1. **Manual.** Each AEA, in conjunction with the LEA, needs to have a reference manual to assure consistency in the use of the PSA model. It is helpful to have reference sheets for personnel to use during the period of time they are learning to use the model. This will increase consistency in the use of the model and will reinforce the appropriate use of terminology.

The PSA manual will include, but will not be limited to, the following elements:

- a. The relationship of PSA to student assessment.
- b. The forms and protocols that will be used.
- c. The procedures to be used to maintain records.
- d. The relationship of PSA to the development of interventions which are reported in the Intervention Plan (IP), the Individualized Education Program (IEP), or educational interventions reported on an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).
- e. The use of progress monitoring to aid the PSA process.
- f. The role of personnel and the use of teaming in the PSA process.

2. **Training for PSA.** Training needs to be provided to enable personnel to have the skills needed to implement PSA. That training should not be limited to a few AEAs nor a few LEA staff members; it must be provided for all personnel who will be participating in programming for persons with disabilities.

All personnel require training in order to effectively use the PSA process to meet the needs of students served. The use of the PSA process will vary from individual to individual. A quick reference sheet for terminology should be included as part of the training. All personnel will benefit from these quick reference sheets in the early stages of implementation.

3. **Assessing the Level of Implementation.** The AEA needs to have a specific procedure for regularly assessing the level of implementation of PSA. There are models that will facilitate establishing criteria to measure the level of implementation.
4. **Parent Involvement/Communication and Due Process.** When parents are consistently involved in the process of developing appropriate interventions for their children, the intent of federal legislation will be met. School personnel will not be at risk of violating parents' and students' due process rights.
5. **PSA Protocol.** The AEA or the LEA must develop a PSA protocol to be submitted to the Department of Education for approval. This provides a compliance safeguard for the AEA and the LEA. This process has been established by the "Hold Harmless" provision of the Renewed Service Delivery System.

F. Future Actions

1. The Department of Education, in cooperation with other educational entities, will establish ongoing communication with institutions of higher learning to facilitate the transformation of teacher training programs needed to enable those programs to teach the skills required to effectively use PSA. A plan for establishing this communication will be developed by October 1992.
2. The Department of Education, in consultation with AEA and LEA staff, will establish a committee to develop standards to use to measure the effectiveness of PSA implementation. This committee will have established standards by February 1993.
3. The Department of Education staff, in consultation with AEA and LEA staff, will establish a committee to review the existing special education rules to determine the changes required to accommodate established PSA procedures. These recommended rule changes will be developed by June 1993.
4. The Department of Education, in consultation with AEA staff, will establish a committee to review the compliance procedures and problems related to compliance that result from the implementation of the PSA process. This committee will have met and provided written recommendations to the Department of Education by January 1993.
5. The Department of Education, in consultation with AEAs and other appropriate agencies, will establish demonstration projects for:
 - a. Early childhood programs to determine if the PSA process is as applicable for this population as the school age population.
 - b. Programs demonstrating how PSA data can be used to determine adult services.
 - c. Students with moderate and severe disabilities to determine if the PSA process is equally applicable for this population.

The results of these projects will be available in report form by June 1993.

6. The Department of Education staff will assure the development of the Information Management System (child count data system) is consistent with PSA. This is an ongoing process.

Summary: State of the Art Survey

Building Assistance Teams

Renewed Service Delivery System (RSDS) Research Report #11

Dixey Morrison, Director of Special Education, Lakeland AEA 3
Dennis Dykstra, Consultant, Bureau of Special Education
Jim Clark, Consultant, Bureau of Special Education

Iowa Department of Education

March 1992

Acknowledgments

Appreciation is expressed to the Area Education Agency (AEA) Directors of Special Education, who identified AEA staff members and local education agency personnel to be interviewed for this study of building assistance teams.

Area Education Agency Personnel Interviews

Jerry Stremel	Keystone Area Education Agency 1
Sue Brown	Lakeland Area Education Agency 3
Howard Jensen	Arrowhead Area Education Agency 5
Damon Lamb	Area Education Agency 6
Rebecca Sale	Area Education Agency 7
Ed Hunt	Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency 9
Jane Hildreth	Grant Wood Area Education Agency 10
Fran Long	Heartland Area Education Agency 11
Dave Happe	Western Hills Area Education Agency 12
Kristine Kelly	Loess Hills Area Education Agency 13
Mary Kay Snyder	Southern Prairie Area Education Agency 15
Linda Brock	Great River Area Education Agency 16
Joy Swanson	Great River Area Education Agency 16

Local Education Agency Personnel Interviews

Nadine Allen	Special education teacher, Fort Madison High School
Mike Bumgarner	Principal, Davis County Middle-Elementary School
Dan Braunschweig	Principal, Laurens-Marathon Elementary School
Janet Folden	Special education teacher, Manson Elementary School
Goldie Galliano	Special education teacher, Stuart-Menlo High School
Gary Reiners	Principal, Phillips Middle School, Fort Dodge
Cindy Martinek	Principal, CAL Community Elementary School, Latimer
Gregg Peterson	Principal, Wilson Elementary School, Cedar Rapids
Sue Lamb	Special education teacher, Glick Elementary School, Marshalltown
Val Guthrie	Eighth grade teacher, Phillips Middle School, Fort Dodge
Kim Pelzer	Second grade teacher, Glick Elementary School, Marshalltown
Linda Wickman	First grade teacher, Cornell Elementary School, Saydel
Carla Grasty	First grade teacher, Stuart-Menlo Elementary School
Barb Jensen	Counselor, Terrace Elementary School, Ankeny
Joe Stablein	English teacher, Coon Rapids-Bayard Middle School
Barb Hoffman	Special education teacher, Carroll Middle School
Bruce Amendt	Principal, Lucia Wallace Elementary School, Algona
Richard Nervig	Principal, Spirit Lake Elementary School, Spirit Lake

We appreciate the assistance of all the professionals identified above who shared their time, experience and insights about building assistance teams. We hope this report proves helpful to Iowa educators as we expand our understanding of how to effectively implement educational innovations designed to assist students in achieving maximum benefit from their school experience.

D.M., D.D., and J.C.

Summary: State of the Art Survey Building Assistance Teams

Renewed Service Delivery System (RSDS) trial sites often use building assistance teams as a mechanism to respond to parent and school personnel concerns about students' learning and behavioral performance. Procedures for organizing and operating building assistance teams are usually described in RSDS building and district plans.

This "State of the Art" study represents an effort to gain an increased understanding of the nature and extent of trial site utilization of building assistance teams. Data were gathered from area education agency (AEA) and local education agency (LEA) respondents via structured telephone interviews. This report summarizes information obtained from 31 interviews: 12 AEA personnel and 19 LEA personnel. Respondents, identified by AEA Directors of Special Education, were selected because of their experience with implementing building assistance teams. AEA and LEA respondents were sent a copy of interview questions in advance to prepare for the telephone interviews.

Information is organized into five sections: (a) Purpose and definition of building assistance teams, (b) Development and operation of building assistance teams, (c) Outcomes of building assistance teams, (d) Challenges, and (e) Future directions. Interview responses are summarized and synthesized in each section. Statements in bold type represent conclusions drawn from responses, and are followed by a narrative that summarizes information upon which the conclusions are based.

A. Purpose and Definition of Building Assistance Teams

- The purpose and procedures of building assistance teams are described in LEA written materials.** All LEA respondents reported that the building assistance team (BAT) purpose and procedures are described in written documents such as building plans and student handbooks. These documents are often used as a guide or reference, and in some cases are used for staff development.
- Most AEAs provide districts with some type of explicit definition of BATs and information about BAT models, outline or structure in RSDS written materials.** Seven of 12 AEAs responding indicated that districts are provided an explicit definition in procedure manuals or other written documents. This definition addresses the BAT information that is required to be included in a building plan, the purpose of the BAT, and in some cases an example. All LEA respondents commented that the AEA has provided them with a model, outline, or structure for developing BATs, and in most cases (61% of LEAs responding) more than one model, outline or structure is provided. All LEA respondents viewed this information as useful.
- Various terms are used to identify building assistance teams.** Examples of other terms that are used include: Problem-Solving Team, Teacher Assistance Team, Student Assistance Team, Round Table, Help Eliminate Learning Problems (HELP), Child Study Team, Intervention Management Team (IMT), and Save Our Kids (SOK).

B. Development and Operation of Building Assistance Teams

- RSDS has supported the further development and utilization of BATs.** Forty-two percent of LEA respondents indicated they did not have BATs in operation prior to participation in RSDS. Some of

the LEA respondents (58%) who said they did have building assistance teams in operation prior to their participation in RSDS commented that RSDS participation had helped to further refine the BAT process and to broaden the responses of the BAT to student problems.

5. **AEAs are actively involved in providing BAT training to LEAs.** Ten of the 12 AEAs responding indicated they provide training to LEAs. Most of the LEA respondents stated they had participated in this training (79%) and, of those who participated, most (68%) found it to be useful.
6. **Leadership and membership on BATs vary widely across the LEAs.** Those most frequently cited (at least 50% of the time) as typical members of the BAT are: principals, general education teachers, special education teachers, AEA support staff, guidance counselors, and Chapter 1 teachers. Principals, special education teachers, general education teachers, and AEA support staff were most often cited as chairpersons of the BAT and as "moving forces" in the development of the BAT.
7. **BAT interventions are primarily student-centered.** Most LEA respondents (79%) indicated that BAT interventions are primarily directed at changing specific student behaviors. Interventions are seldom directed at system-level variables, such as discipline policies, curriculum expectations, and so on, that impact student performance.
8. **Parents are most often informed that the school has a BAT in operation through mass media approaches.** While various methods, such as school board communications and PTO/PTA communications, are used, most LEAs inform parents through mass-media-type communications such as school newsletters, student handbooks, etc. (Parents whose children are experiencing difficulty and come to the attention of the BAT are typically involved in the process through direct teacher-parent communications such as conferences or phone calls.)
9. **The time of day that BATs meet and the time allotted for review of student performance concerns vary widely.** LEA respondents indicated that BATs meet at various times: before school, during the school day, or after school. Some respondents commented that the time allotted for the discussion of student performance concerns is limited, with limits ranging from 20 minutes to one hour per student.

C. Outcomes of Building Assistance Teams

10. **LEAs view the BAT process as a highly effective method of responding to concerns regarding student performance.** The perceived effectiveness of BATs was rated by 17 LEA respondents at an overall average of 4.2 on a 5-point scale, with 5 being "highly effective" and a rating of 1 being "highly ineffective." There was much less consensus among AEA respondents, with some rating effectiveness very high and others commenting they were not able to adequately give an overall rating as districts were at various stages of implementation. First-year trial site AEAs indicated they had not had enough experience with the BAT process to be able to make this judgment.
11. **Most BATs have not developed systematic procedures or strategies for evaluating effectiveness.** Although 84% of LEA respondents indicated they keep data on BAT activities, only 31% of LEA respondents reported that they had developed a process or strategy for evaluating BAT effectiveness. Two AEA respondents reported that they had developed an evaluation process or strategy.
12. **LEA respondents believe the BAT process has reduced the time required to get help to students who are experiencing learning or behavioral difficulties, and that the quality of assistance has changed in a positive direction.** Sixty-three percent of LEA respondents stated that the BAT process has expedited getting help to students who need it. Seventy-nine percent of LEA respondents indicated that the quality of services to students experiencing difficulty had improved through the BAT process.

13. **When asked to describe what they would expect to see in a building that is successfully operating a BAT, LEA respondents listed the following characteristics:**
 - High levels of administrative support for efforts to solve students' problems
 - High levels of teamwork, cooperation and collaboration among staff, administration and parents
 - Collaborative working relationships between general education and special education teachers
 - Staff members who are willing to take risks (including risking failure) and are supported in the implementation of innovative and creative responses to student needs
 - Among administrators and teachers, a sense of shared responsibility for meeting student needs.

D. Challenges

14. **AEA and LEA respondents offered the following observations regarding barriers to the effective operation of BATs, and solutions that can address these barriers.**

Barrier	Solution
Inadequate time for BATs to meet and time for classroom teachers with student concerns to attend BAT meetings.	Insist on being "on-task" in meetings and have meetings planned, including agenda, schedule, expectations, etc. Before- and after-school times can be utilized, with flex-time provisions. Substitute teachers can be used to free classroom teachers for participation.
Lack of consistent follow-up with interventions that are implemented.	Assign follow-up tasks and responsibilities to different BAT members, with an emphasis on communication with teachers who have referred students to the team.
Classroom teacher reluctance to ask for assistance from the BAT.	Develop mechanisms for effective communication between the BAT and classroom teachers. Offer administratively supported opportunities for rotating participation of classroom teachers on the BAT.
Inadequate administrative support.	Involve administrators with the development of procedures.

15. LEA respondents offered the following advice to those considering the development of BATs:

- Utilize BAT staff development opportunities.
- Go slow—one step at a time.
- Involve classroom teachers in the BAT planning and development activities.
- Reinforce teachers' current effective practices.
- Define the BAT as a helping mechanism (not an indication that the teacher is not effective).
- Plan adequate time for BAT meetings.
- Team composition should include those with a variety of expertise.
- Talk to others who have experience in implementing BATs.
- Compile as much data as possible before BAT meetings, so the team can focus on the development of interventions during the meeting.

E. Future Actions

The authors of this report and the AEA Directors of Special Education discussed survey findings regarding the Building Assistance Teams, and developed the following future actions:

1. The Department of Education, in consultation with AEA Directors of Special Education, will work on an ongoing basis with institutions of higher learning to facilitate the inclusion of curriculum that addresses teamwork and collaboration skills essential to functioning on building assistance teams.
2. The Department of Education, in consultation with AEA and LEA staff, will develop a set of recommended practices for evaluating the effectiveness of building assistance teams. Such practices will include a process and procedures for collecting data regarding the results of interventions developed by the BAT. These recommended practices will be developed by November 1992. (Note: This effort should include a review of the BAT study, currently in process, that is piloting a procedure for collecting outcome data; a report of findings will be available in August 1992.)
3. The Department of Education, in consultation with AEA and LEA staff, will identify training materials that can be used in staff development efforts related to building assistance teams. These materials will be identified by October 1992.
4. The AEA Directors of Special Education will develop proposed solutions to barriers identified in the study. A summary of recommendations will be developed by November 1992.

**Summary:
State of the Art Survey**

**Maintaining and
Reintegrating Students in
the Neighborhood School**

**Renewed Service Delivery System (RSDS)
Research Report #13**

Harold Webb, Director of Special Education, Northern Trails AEA 2
Bureau of Special Education Staff, Department of Education

Iowa Department of Education

June 1992

Acknowledgments

Appreciation is expressed to the Area Education Agency (AEA) Directors of Special Education who designated the AEA staff members to participate in this study.

Area Education Agency Personnel Interviews

Jan Tetterton	Keystone Area Education Agency 1
James Quinn	Lakeland Area Education Agency 3
Joan Wallin	Arrowhead Area Education Agency 5
Peg Smith	Area Education Agency 6
Connie Sullivan	Area Education Agency 7
Virginia Alexander	Area Education Agency 7
Ed Hunt	Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency 9
Sally Sinclair	Grant Wood Area Education Agency 10
Dick Tucker	Heartland Area Education Agency 11
Jerry Brown	Western Hills Area Education Agency 12
Renee Prochaska	Loess Hills Area Education Agency 13
Donna Luscombe	Southern Prairie Area Education Agency 15
Barbara Han	Great River Education Agency 16
Luann Glaser	Great River Education Agency 16
Donna Neatheney	Great River Education Agency 16

Local Education Agency Personnel Interviews

Doug Bengston	Principal, Jefferson Elementary, Charles City
Bonnie Twedt	Director of Special Services, Marshalltown
Dennis Hoyer	Principal, Armstrong-Ringsted Elementary and Middle Schools
Pam Bantz	Director of Special Education & At-Risk Programs, Glenwood
Cathy Jarvis	Special education teacher, Agassiz Elementary School, Ottumwa
Melody Raub	Special education teacher, Clark Elementary School, New London

We appreciate the assistance of all the professionals identified above who shared their time, opinions and viewpoints about maintaining and reintegrating students in their home schools. We hope this report proves helpful to Iowa educators as we expand our understanding of how to effectively implement educational innovations designed to assist students in achieving maximum benefit from their school experience.

H.W. & Bureau of Special Education Staff

Summary: State of the Art Survey Maintaining and Reintegrating Students in the Neighborhood School

The Renewed Service Delivery System (RSDS) includes an improvement area related to the use of maintaining and reintegrating students in the neighborhood or home school.

This report describes the innovative efforts Iowa educators have experienced when implementing this concept. Information in this report is the summary of 22 interviews with representatives of Iowa's area education agencies (AEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs). Respondents were chosen by AEA Directors of Special Education on the basis of their experience with exemplary practices in maintaining and reintegrating students with disabilities in their home schools. AEA respondents were sent a copy of the survey in advance to prepare for phone interviews.

Information in this report is organized into five sections: (a) Defining the model, (b) Training and dissemination, (c) Implementation, (d) Perceptions of effectiveness and barriers, and (e) Future actions.

A. Defining the Model

1. Eighty-eight percent of the respondents stated that they do not have written procedures as to how to maintain or reintegrate students with disabilities in their home schools. However, four respondents said that procedures are under development.
2. Thirteen respondents reported that they do not have board policies for least restrictive environment (LRE) that specifically address the process of maintaining or reintegrating students with disabilities in their home schools. Four respondents did, however, say they are under development.
3. Respondents noted that they may include a statement of philosophy regarding LRE and home schools as part of building plans. Two respondents stated that their agencies do have position statements regarding LRE. The other fifteen stated that they do not. Eight agencies, however, reported that they are experimenting with or developing policies.

B. Training and Dissemination

4. Four respondents stated that "natural proportions" is the model that their agency uses for maintaining or reintegrating students with disabilities in their home schools. Two stated that "zero rejection" is the model used.
5. Thirteen respondents said that their model for maintaining or reintegrating students with disabilities into their home schools often does not include students with severe and profound disabilities.
6. Although there are a number of agencies which have received training from the Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC), The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps (TASH), the Iowa

Department of Education, and the AEAs, respondents overwhelmingly expressed their concern that this is an area in which training was under-emphasized or absent, and that training in this area is needed.

C. Implementation

- 7. Many agencies stated that parents are highly involved in the process of maintaining or reintegrating their child back into their home school. However, it was also stated by all respondents that parents must be strong advocates for integration if it is to be offered as a viable option, and if the reintegration is to be successful once the student is placed into his or her home school.
- 8. Teachers and support staff members are involved in team meetings and placement decision making when it comes to the implementation of maintaining or reintegrating students with disabilities in their home schools. However, support staff members are often engaged in or arranging staff development activities for other staff.
- 9. Respondents state that administrators function in a supportive role—that is, they must believe in the concept of maintaining or reintegrating students with disabilities in their home schools and then support decisions made by staffing teams applying the concept.
- 10. Parents are primarily made aware of neighborhood school options through the following means: other parents, newsletters, conferences, and Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings.

D. Perceptions of Effectiveness and Barriers

- 11. Many respondents reported that the IEP was the only means for the recording of data regarding the implementation of maintaining or reintegrating students with disabilities into their home schools. Several respondents stated that district central offices may also keep demographic and trend data.
- 12. In most districts there was not a unique form of monitoring students with disabilities who were maintained or reintegrated in their home school.
- 13. All respondents stated that parent involvement and parent satisfaction have increased, and students have become more accepting of diversity, as a result of more students with disabilities being placed in their home schools. Many respondents also stated that teachers may become frustrated unless they receive appropriate support and assistance to maintain all students in classroom activities.
- 14. "Effective" was the word used by most respondents as to how they feel their agency is implementing the maintaining or reintegrating of students with disabilities into their home schools.
- 15. As to how agencies evaluate the effectiveness of placements of students with disabilities in general education classes, the "degree to which students are engaged in the activities of the school day as well as the level of peer and adult interaction that occurs within those activities" was the overwhelming response given (by 15 of the 22 respondents).
- 16. Eleven respondents reported that busing has decreased as a result of maintaining or reintegrating students with disabilities in their home schools.

17. Barriers and solutions. When asked to list barriers and solutions for the barriers, respondents' comments focused on several themes:

Barrier:	Solutions:
There is a lack of necessary skills and training on the part of LEA and AEA staff to support general and special education teachers who are willing to maintain and integrate students with disabilities in their home schools. Opportunities for staff development and further training typically do not focus on the maintenance of students with disabilities in their home schools. Attitudes and biases that limit openness to alternative approaches are additional barriers.	The Iowa Department of Education, AEAs, and professional associations should provide opportunities for staff development that focuses on the maintenance of students in their home schools.
Lack of coordination among the various services within a building that a student might need is viewed as a barrier (in particular, between special education and Chapter 1 services).	Utilize the building plan as a means to integrate the services of various professionals working within a building. Foster a climate where cooperation is encouraged and collaborative efforts are facilitated.
Funding, space limitations and high numbers of students in a classroom were cited as additional barriers.	When students with disabilities are maintained in general education classrooms, it is essential to formulate intervention plans and to arrange for ongoing consultation for the teacher implementing the plan. Arrangement for peer tutoring and other in-class support systems have proven helpful in maintaining students in general education classes.

E. Future Actions

- 1. Standards. Establish a study group to formulate standards and procedures for maintaining and reintegrating students with disabilities in their neighborhood schools. The focus of this action should be on decision-making considerations. The effort will result in a paper for consideration by AEAs and LEAs, as well as by institutions of higher learning.
- 2. Database. Formulate a database to assist AEAs and LEAs with the evaluation of programs where students with disabilities have been maintained or reintegrated in their home schools.
- 3. Staff development. The Department of Education has sponsored team efforts to assist neighborhood-school reintegration of students with disabilities. This availability of assistance should be promoted. Additionally, staff development options should be made available at the Special Education Conference in March 1993, with other offerings from the AEAs and Iowa Department of Education.
- 4. Compliance. Compliance procedures utilized by the Iowa Department of Education and AEAs should be reviewed and strengthened to provide meaningful feedback to Iowa schools, who are the agents for maintaining and reintegrating students with disabilities in their home schools.

***Summary:
State of the Art Survey***

Collaboration

**Renewed Service Delivery System (RSDS)
*Research Report #14***

**Paula Vincent, Director of Special Education, Grant Wood AEA 10
Erik Eriksen, Consultant, Bureau of Instruction & Curriculum
Jim Reese, Consultant, Bureau of Special Education
Mary Sullivan, Consultant, Bureau of Special Education**

Iowa Department of Education

May 1992

Acknowledgments

Appreciation is expressed to the Area Education Agency (AEA) Directors of Special Education who identified AEA personnel and local education agency personnel to be interviewed for this study of collaboration.

Area Education Agency Personnel Interviews

Patricia Notestine	Northern Trails Area Education Agency 2
Carolyn Kruger	Lakeland Area Education Agency 3
Beverly Fisher	Arrowhead Area Education Agency 5
Colleen Sehr	Area Education Agency 6
Shari Thompson	Heartland Area Education Agency 11
Judy Keith	Western Hills Area Education Agency 12
Jeanne Bride	Loess Hills Area Education Agency 13
Lindy Klinge	Loess Hills Area Education Agency 13
Pat Rodda	Southern Prairie Area Education Agency 15
Linda Brock	Great River Area Education Agency 16

Local Education Agency Personnel Interviews

Leona Hoth	Special education teacher, Spencer Middle School
Terri Parker	Special education teacher, Duncombe Elem. School, Fort Dodge
Jodi Peters	Special education teacher, Odebolt Elementary School
Pat Shaw	Special education teacher, Clarion Elementary/Middle School
Sue Mecham	Sixth grade teacher, Clarion Elementary/Middle School
Gayle Carrier	Special education teacher, West Des Moines
Alma Shell	Special education teacher, Waukee Middle School
Susan Hope	Fifth grade teacher, Waukee Middle School
Karen Beeler	Special education teacher, Interstate 35 High School
Rosie Lundquist	English teacher, Interstate 35 High School
Jim Garbison	Special education teacher, Valley High School, West Des Moines
Glenda Sellers	Special education teacher, Indianola Middle School
Pam Robinson	Special education teacher, Central Elementary School, Lewis Central
Gretchen Price	Special education teacher, Douma Elementary School, Ottumwa
Jan Hilfers	Fifth grade teacher, Douma Elementary School, Ottumwa

We appreciate the assistance of all the professionals identified above who shared their time, experience and insights about collaboration. We hope this report proves helpful to Iowa educators as we expand our understanding of how to effectively implement educational innovations designed to assist students in achieving maximum benefit from their school experience.

P. V., E. E., J. R., & M. S.

Summary: State of the Art Survey Collaboration

Trial sites participating in the Renewed Service Delivery System (RSDS) initiative are implementing alternative ways of delivering services that capitalize on the expertise of both general education and special education personnel, and blend resources for the benefit of all students. Many of the alternatives being implemented emphasize collaboration between general education and special education instructional personnel. For the purpose of this study, the term "collaboration" refers to the interaction of special education teachers and general education teachers for the benefit of students. The definition is intentionally broad, to encompass the various forms of collaboration, consultation and cooperative teaching.

This study represents an effort to gain an increased understanding of the nature and extent of collaboration in RSDS trial sites. Information was gathered from area education agency (AEA) and local education agency (LEA) respondents through structured telephone interviews. Respondents were sent a copy of the interview questions in advance to prepare for the telephone interviews. This report summarizes information obtained from twenty-five interviews: 10 AEA personnel and 15 LEA personnel. Respondents, identified by AEA Directors of Special Education, were selected because of their experience with implementing collaborative efforts.

Information from the interviews is summarized and presented in four sections: (a) Model, purpose and development; (b) Participants and operational considerations; (c) Barriers and benefits; and (d) Effectiveness, future plans and advice. The final sections, (e) Best practices, and (f) Future actions, draw conclusions from the information provided by the respondents.

A. Model, Purpose and Development

1. Collaboration efforts are designed and developed at the building level by teams of general and special education personnel. All respondents indicated that the basis for collaboration is a model developed and adopted at the building level. School district central administration and area education agencies are not requiring buildings to adopt a specific model of collaboration. Development of and decisions about the collaboration efforts are usually the responsibility of a team of general education and special education personnel, and collaboration efforts are typically described in RSDS building plans. In a few cases, development and implementation have occurred through an agreement of a special education teacher and a general education teacher to experiment with collaboration.
2. Collaboration efforts are designed to provide more opportunities for timely assistance to more students, and are most frequently described in RSDS building plans. Maintaining students in general education classes, more timely assistance for students experiencing difficulties regardless of designation (e.g., special education, at risk, Chapter 1), and increased support to classroom teachers were the most frequently cited purposes for collaboration. A majority of the school district personnel indicated that a written description of their collaboration effort was included in their RSDS building plan. Written information on collaboration from area education agencies is included in AEA RSDS trial site plans, information on RSDS building plans, or training materials.

3. **Staff development is an essential ingredient of a successful and dynamic collaboration effort.** All respondents indicated that they participated in some type of staff development program as part of their implementation effort. The staff development was typically provided through the area education agency by AEA personnel. A significant finding was that the training efforts typically did not include follow-up training or meetings. All teachers reported the training to be beneficial. Several "veteran" collaborators noted that follow-up sessions with a "refresher" orientation, focusing on advanced skills and practices, would be helpful.

B. Participants and Operational Considerations

4. **Special and general education teachers from all levels and AEA support personnel are involved with collaboration efforts.** Participation in collaboration is broad, with individual teacher attitudes and interests the primary determining factors for participation. In most sites represented by the respondents, the programs involve classroom teachers from various grade levels and content areas. Rarely, however, did respondents report that all the teachers in a building were participating in the program. AEA support staff personnel are most frequently involved in collaborative problem-solving efforts regarding individual students and less frequently involved with in-classroom collaboration.
5. **Elementary and middle schools are the most likely buildings to become involved with collaborative efforts.** Ten of the twelve school-based programs represented by respondents were in elementary and middle schools. In addition, the majority of programs nominated by respondents as model or exemplary sites were at the elementary and middle school levels.
6. **The three most frequently cited descriptors of current collaboration programs were:** [1] joint problem-solving for individual students by a general education and a special education teacher; [2] direct instruction of special education students and students with similar needs by the special education teacher in the general education classroom; and [3] cooperative teaching by general education and special education teachers. Joint planning of daily lessons and activities by a general education and a special education teacher, and planning and individual student problem-solving by grade level teacher teams that include a special education teacher, were also identified, but at a considerably lower frequency than the top three descriptors.
7. **Adequate teacher planning and preparation time is critical to the success of collaboration.** As one respondent noted, "This is *the major issue* for an effective collaboration program." Most respondents indicated that teachers must have adequate *joint* planning and preparation time if collaboration is to be successful. As a result, teachers involved with collaboration have to find and use all available opportunities for joint planning. One respondent noted that collaboration efforts have influenced preparation and planning time in a negative way; that is, collaboration and joint planning are added to the available time with nothing being taken away.
8. **Collaboration efforts have little impact on the master schedules of buildings, but have affected individual teacher schedules and student schedules.** The daily and weekly schedules of building activities and classes have not been affected by collaboration. However, respondents noted that individual teacher schedules, particularly those of resource teachers, are frequently adjusted to accommodate joint problem-solving efforts, joint planning, and cooperative teaching. In some cases, classroom teachers also adjust their classroom schedule of instructional activities to accommodate cooperative teaching efforts. Schedules of special education students are also adjusted so they can participate in the team-taught or cooperative teaching classes.

9. **School district respondents consistently identified special education teachers as the most influential individuals in the development and maintenance of collaboration efforts.** Principals were the second most frequently mentioned individual critical to the development and maintenance of collaboration efforts. General education teachers were identified as critical players in the continuation of collaboration efforts.
10. **Collaboration efforts also influence the roles and activities of AEA support personnel.** Respondents noted that AEA support personnel are becoming more involved with problem-solving activities on individual students by assisting individual teachers and teacher teams in planning interventions and assessing student progress. In addition, while AEA support personnel retain their "specialist" or discipline-specific identification, their roles are gradually changing to reflect their ability to function as a general resource to students with educational problems.
11. **RSDS has led to better-defined, more sophisticated and more comprehensive collaboration efforts.** A majority of respondents indicated that collaboration efforts were in operation prior to involvement with RSDS. The most significant changes to these programs as a result of RSDS have been greater sophistication, expanded staff involvement, and a significant increase in the number of buildings involved with collaboration efforts.

C. Barriers and Benefits

12. **Respondents identified a variety of challenges to effective collaboration programs and possible solutions to these challenges:**

Barrier	Solution
<p>Time for joint planning and preparation, and problem-solving efforts</p> <p>[This item was the most frequently mentioned challenge to collaboration. Respondents also consistently identified joint planning time as an essential ingredient of a successful collaboration program. Some respondents indicated that failure to engage in joint planning can lead to the special education teacher becoming an aide, an ineffective use of teacher talent and time.]</p>	<p>Principals can help identify opportunities for additional preparation and planning time. Examples — one principal teaches a class so the special education and classroom teachers have time for joint planning and preparation; another principal allows teachers involved in collaboration to give up "extra duties" such as recess and lunchroom duty and use the "duty" time for joint planning or problem-solving. Administrative awareness of the need for joint planning and preparation time for teachers involved in collaborative efforts, and administrative leadership in identifying or reaching solutions for problems such as scheduling conflicts, should be fostered. Time for joint planning and problem-solving must be a priority that is clearly established and adhered to, but does not necessarily have to be scheduled daily.</p>

Barrier	Solution
Individual student schedules [This item is a double-edged sword. In most cases, respondents were reporting difficulty in getting special education students scheduled for "collaborative" or cooperative teaching classes. Some respondents, however, noted that scheduling students into the same general education class could be overdone – resulting in too many special education students in one class.]	At the secondary level in particular, hand-scheduling special education students rather than computer scheduling is a possible solution. Teachers should consider the possibility of using multiple sections of a course or multiple classes. From the beginning of any collaborative or cooperative teaching effort, there must be an awareness and sensitivity to the total number of students in a class or classroom, and attention to the number of special education students assigned to each class.
Direct, active principal support	The principal should be an active participant in planning discussions; he or she should help teachers problem-solve scheduling issues.
Pre-planning for cooperative teaching or collaboration	Planning and discussing the following topics before beginning implementation will avoid many startup problems: (1) purpose of the program; (2) roles, responsibilities and expectations of teachers and students; and (3) operational issues.
Differences in teacher attitudes, philosophy, and personalities	Advanced planning and discussions may help alleviate or mediate some of these differences. Initial implementation efforts should only include teachers who want to be involved; a small, but successful start will win converts.

13. **Collaboration efforts have significant positive effects on students.** Respondents identified a significant number of student benefits from collaboration programs. The most frequently cited benefits were: [1] More teacher assistance is available to students and the assistance is provided in a more timely manner. [2] More students receive assistance. [3] Greater involvement in the general education program and less dependence on pull-out services enhances the self-esteem and self-concept of special education students. [4] Students are provided better instruction as a result of teachers sharing strategies and techniques; students benefit from a wider array of intervention options. [5] Opportunity for success in the general education program for special education students is enhanced. [6] Instructional outcomes for all students are enhanced. A unique and interesting, but low-frequency, benefit was the observation that special education students benefit from the greater challenge of being held to "better," general education classroom standards.
14. **Collaboration efforts also provide benefits for teachers.** Just as respondents were able to describe a menu of benefits to students, they identified a significant list of benefits to teachers from collaborative

efforts. The most frequently cited benefits were: [1] Teachers expand their skill repertoires by learning from each other. [2] More immediate support is provided to classroom teachers in the development and implementation of classroom and instructional accommodations. [3] Special education teachers develop a more comprehensive understanding of the general education program. [4] Teachers share responsibility in meeting the broad range of student needs through problem-solving efforts and cooperative teaching.

D. Effectiveness, Future Plans and Advice

15. **While only one area education agency has a specific procedure for evaluating the effectiveness of building-based collaboration efforts, buildings do include some form of evaluation of their collaboration effort in the RSDS building plan.** Most area education agencies require an evaluation component to be included in building plans, and respondents noted that evaluation of their collaboration effort is as an element of the RSDS building plan. However, respondents also indicated that evaluation activities have not been started or completed, and so evaluation findings were not reported.
16. **General education teachers, special education teachers and principals respond favorably to collaboration efforts.** With but one exception, respondents indicated that teachers and principals hold favorable attitudes towards collaboration. Fourteen of the fifteen teachers interviewed reported favorable or highly favorable responses to collaboration.
17. **Parents and students are reported to have favorable responses to collaboration efforts.** Teachers consistently indicated that parents and students, both general education and special education, are favorably disposed to collaboration. No unfavorable or highly unfavorable responses from parents or students were reported.
18. **Current collaboration efforts not only will continue, but will expand, and additional efforts will be developed and implemented.** All but one of the collaboration efforts included in this study will continue operating through next year. A majority of teachers also reported that their programs will in all probability expand over the next year, and that additional programs will be developed in their districts. It should also be noted that all teachers reported other collaboration efforts in their districts. AEA personnel share the view that building-based collaboration efforts will increase because of AEA plans to expand collaboration efforts through expanded training opportunities.
19. **Respondents offered the following advice to districts considering collaboration.**
[1] Active administrative support, not just lip service, is essential. [2] Teachers need to take time to develop shared expectations of each other and of students. [3] Visit existing or model programs. [4] Appreciate the fact that a smooth operation won't happen overnight; be patient and be persistent. [5] Be sure to include all parties to be involved with the effort in the initial planning and training. [6] Realize and acknowledge that a successful collaboration effort requires additional work on the part of teachers. [7] Flexibility is a much-needed ingredient.
20. **Respondents offered the following advice to area education agencies in terms of supporting district collaboration efforts.** [1] Implementation should be voluntary. [2] Be prepared to provide tailored, individualized training for districts or buildings. [3] Provide realistic models and examples of collaboration efforts that work. [4] Encourage and support visitation of "model" sites. [5] Include a follow-up component to training efforts. [6] Encourage and support the development of networking among buildings and teachers involved with collaboration efforts.

E. Best Practices

1. **The goals or purpose of collaboration, and the roles, responsibilities and expectations of the various participants, should be clearly established prior to implementing a collaboration effort.** Addressing these points in advance of implementation provides the opportunity to discuss not only operational issues, but different attitudes and philosophies.
2. **Staff development is essential to a successful collaboration effort.** The staff development program should include not only initial training in the "basics" of collaboration, but follow-up and advanced training and technical assistance to participating teachers.
3. **Successful collaboration efforts require adequate joint planning and preparation time for the teachers who are involved.** Collaboration that makes a difference doesn't "just happen." If a collaboration effort is to have a significant positive effect on both students and teachers, adequate planning and preparation must be an integral and ongoing component of the effort.
4. **Principal support is critical to collaboration.** The leadership of the principal is necessary for a collaboration effort to become fully developed and to be sustained over time. Assistance in adjusting teacher and student schedules, help in scheduling joint planning time, and the provision of staff development opportunities are just a few examples of the support and assistance that principals can provide that make a significant difference to the success of collaboration.

F. Future Actions

1. **Evaluation of collaboration efforts.** The impact of collaboration efforts should be assessed. Such an effort will need to address the multiple variables and the multiple dimensions of collaboration. The evaluation should consider not only the impact of collaboration on students, but on teachers as well. In particular, the evaluation should consider the extent to which collaboration efforts influence teachers and whether the changes in teacher practice are generalized and sustained over time. Evaluation of collaboration efforts should be included as a future research focus of RSDS.
2. **Study of AEA support staff using collaboration as a method of service delivery.** The current study focused on the collaboration between general education and special education teachers. A similar study should be conducted that examines the collaboration between AEA support staff and building staff.
3. **Involvement of the AEA Educational Services Division.** Given the nature of collaboration, the Educational Services Divisions of the AEAs should be considered as contributors to staff development and technical assistance efforts on collaboration. The Special Education and Educational Services Divisions should cooperate in developing an integrated AEA effort for supporting and assisting districts and buildings interested in collaboration.
4. **Use of collaboration at the high school level.** The apparent limited use of collaboration at the high school level should be investigated. The investigation should be designed to identify the specific barriers or reasons for limited use of collaboration at this level and to determine appropriate courses of action in response to the identified barriers or reasons.

Summary: State of the Art Survey

Outcome Criteria

Renewed Service Delivery System (RSDS) Research Report #15

**Gene Pratt, Director of Special Education, Keystone AEA 1
Pat Sitlington, Consultant, Bureau of Special Education
Mary Sullivan, Consultant, Bureau of Special Education**

Iowa Department of Education

June 1992

Acknowledgments

Appreciation is expressed to the Area Education Agency (AEA) Directors of Special Education who identified AEA staff members and local education agency personnel to be interviewed for this study. Appreciation is also extended to all the professionals identified below who shared their time, expertise, and insights concerning outcome criteria.

Area Education Agency Personnel Interviews

Cindy Breitbach	Keystone Area Education Agency 1
Joe Ulman	Lakeland Area Education Agency 3
Howard Jensen	Arrowhead Area Education Agency 5
Damon Lamb	Area Education Agency 6
Ed Hunt	Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency 9
Jim Stumme	Heartland Area Education Agency 11
Dave Happe	Western Hills Area Education Agency 12

Local Education Agency Personnel Interviews

Tim Hoffman	Superintendent, Adel-DeSoto Community Schools
Nancy Raw	Administrative Assistant, Cedar Rapids Comm. Schools

We hope that this report proves helpful to Iowa educators as we expand our understanding of how to effectively develop and apply outcome criteria.

G. P., P.S., and M.S.

Summary: State of the Art Survey Outcome Criteria

The Renewed Service Delivery System (RSDS) includes an improvement area related to the development of outcome criteria that is stated as follows:

Outcome Oriented Criterion: Students will benefit by an outcome criterion focusing on gains in students' skills, when adopted and applied to decisions about programming, placement and reviews/evaluations.

This "State of the Art" study represents an effort to gain an increased understanding of the current nature and extent of the development and application of outcome criteria throughout the individual's educational experience. Data were gathered from area education agency (AEA) and local education agency (LEA) respondents via structured telephone interviews. This report summarizes information obtained from interviews with seven AEA and two LEA personnel, representing eight AEAs. Respondents, identified by AEA Directors of Special Education, were selected because of their experience with the concept of outcome criteria. Respondents were sent a copy of the interview questions in advance to prepare for the telephone interviews.

Information in this report is organized into five sections: (a) Definition and model, (b) Operational considerations, (c) Effectiveness, (d) Best practices, and (e) Future actions. Statements in bold summarize the responses of those interviewed.

A. Definition and Model

- All AEAs stated that they were working on developing or documenting definitions of key terms related to exit criteria.** Four of the eight AEAs interviewed have a definition of "outcome criteria" in their written material. Six of the AEAs have a definition of "exit criteria." Respondents from six AEAs also indicated that they have written definitions of "goal" and "objective" in their materials. These terms are defined either in the AEA procedure manual, AEA plan, or RSDS training materials. One AEA has developed a separate booklet on outcome criteria.
- The majority of AEAs do not follow one specific model of measurement of student outcomes.** Several AEAs use the materials on performance monitoring, exit criteria, and program modification developed by the Department of Education. Three of the eight AEAs have a handbook or other written material for measurement of student outcomes.
- Three AEAs have established specific outcome criteria for exit from special education.** Two of these AEAs have also established criteria for movement from one program to another.
- The training of AEA and LEA staff related to outcome criteria has been accomplished mainly through inservice sessions on the underlying concepts and principles.** This concept is often integrated in training materials on progress monitoring and problem solving. Some AEAs leave this training to the discretion of specific professional discipline areas. Training of LEA staff is often delivered to teams or representatives from districts or buildings. One-to-one training was also cited.

B. Operational Considerations

5. In general, students are not involved in establishing desired student outcome criteria in any of the AEAs. Two AEAs did indicate, however, that adolescents with behavioral disorders are sometimes involved in this process.
6. In all AEAs, parents are involved in identifying desired outcomes for their son or daughter as part of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and child study process. In some AEAs, parents are also involved in the development of general procedures for identifying outcomes as part of RSDS committees on this topic.
7. RSDS building representatives or liaisons determine the specific training/support needed by their respective building staff in developing and applying outcome criteria.
8. Goals, objectives, and outcomes are established for students when interventions are begun. This could be at the child study team meeting, or as part of the initial IEP meeting or annual review.
9. There was great variability in how systematically AEAs assessed the attainment of outcomes at the four levels of problem solving described below. (For further information on problem solving, see RSDS Research Report #10, Problem-Solving Approach.)

• According to respondents from the eight AEAs represented, the number of AEAs systematically assessing outcomes at each level is:	Level 1	2
	Level 2	3
	Level 3	5
	Level 4	6
• According to respondents from the eight AEAs represented, the number of AEAs summarizing data into a composite at each level is:	Level 1	2
	Level 2	3
	Level 3	5
	Level 4	6

- Level 1:** Collaboration between teachers, students, and parents. This usually occurs at the classroom level, and is informal.
- Level 2:** Collaboration with other resources. This usually occurs within general education, using the building assistance team or teacher assistance team. A formal problem-solving system is employed, resulting in a specific plan.
- Level 3:** Problem-solving team approach. This is essentially the same as Level 2, with these exceptions: it includes special education responsibility and resources, the team approach is more emphasized, and the plan is written.
- Level 4:** Multidisciplinary team approach. This level includes the multidisciplinary special education team, parents, and general education representatives. A full range of special education resources may be considered, special education due process requirements come into play, eligibility and placement decisions are made, and the resulting plan is an Individualized Education Program.

C. Effectiveness

10. Respondents from four AEAs said that the measurement of student outcomes changed as a result of the implementation of RSDS.
11. The following activities were reported to occur *more often* as a result of implementing RSDS concepts:
 - Use of functional assessment
 - Closer involvement with parents
 - Concentrating more on student performance and monitoring goal attainment
 - Use of direct observation
 - Use of curriculum-based measurement procedures
 - Focus placed on what outcomes should be for students
12. The following activities were reported to occur *less often* as a result of implementing RSDS concepts:
 - Use of standardized tests
 - Use of the "testing expert" model
13. Responses indicate that one AEA collects measures of consumer satisfaction related to student improvement or measurement of student outcomes, and another AEA is in the process of developing such measures.
14. Respondents who were able to rate the use of outcome criteria in their AEA or LEA assigned an effectiveness rating of 3.16 on a 5-point scale, with 5 being "highly effective" and 1 being "highly ineffective." (Note: This average was based on the responses of six of the nine individuals interviewed. The remaining three individuals felt that they could not evaluate the effectiveness of the use of outcome criteria since implementation was just beginning.)
15. Respondents from five of the AEAs felt that the use of outcome criteria has improved the provision of services for individuals with disabilities in their AEA.
16. Respondents stated that the use of outcome criteria had the following effects on the provision of services for individuals with disabilities:
 - Greatly facilitates decision making
 - Results in more tailored interventions
 - Concentrates more on looking to see if the student is having success—not just looking at the test score
 - Totally shifts the nature of services from "within student" to goal attainment
 - Ensures that classroom efforts are directly related to the learning goals
 - Helps everyone have the same focus
 - Helps parents realize goals
 - Causes general educators to realize the students with disabilities will return to their classrooms
 - Provides accountability for staff and district

17. Respondents offered the following observations regarding barriers to effective development and application of outcome criteria, and solutions that can address these barriers.

Barrier	Proposed solution
New process; takes a great deal of time.	Administrators should allocate more time for this process
Lack of knowledge on the part of AEA and LEA staff.	Systematic staff development is needed across all districts and the AEAs.
Current data management systems at both state and local levels do not collect or aggregate the data needed for this process.	Review and revise data management systems to reflect emphasis on outcome criteria.
No formal model adopted for developing outcome criteria.	Provide structure to buildings and districts, while still allowing for local decision making.

D. Best Practices

The following actions are recommended as best practice related to the development and application of outcome criteria.

- 1. It is recommended that both parents and students be involved in the development of the student's outcome criteria. This would assist students in developing an ownership of their program and in developing self-determination skills.
- 2. Student outcomes should be systematically assessed at all levels of problem solving. Data from these outcome assessments should be summarized for each level.
- 3. Efforts should be made to obtain building level administrative support for the process of determining student outcomes. This would allow more time to be allocated for this process in working with individual students.

E. Future Actions

- 1. The Department of Education, in conjunction with the AEAs, should provide an overall structure for the process of determination and application of outcome criteria.
- 2. The Department of Education, in conjunction with the AEAs, should provide systematic staff training in the development and application of outcome criteria.
- 3. The current data management systems at the local and state levels should be revised to reflect an emphasis on the development of student outcome criteria.

Summary:
State of the Art Survey

Parent
Involvement

Renewed Service Delivery System (RSDS)
Research Report #16

Ron Dente, Director of Special Education, Great River AEA 16
Cory Menke, Parent/Educator Connection, Great River AEA 16
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Iowa Department of Education

June 1992

Acknowledgments

Summary: State of the Art Survey Parent Involvement

Appreciation is expressed to the Area Education Agency (AEA) Directors of Special Education who identified AEA staff members and local education agency personnel to be interviewed for this study of parent involvement.

Area Education Agency Personnel Interviews

Gloria Klinefelter	Keystone Area Education Agency 1
Marc Singer	Lakeland Area Education Agency 3
Bev Fisher	Arrowhead Area Education Agency 5
Kathy Lenz	Arrowhead Area Education Agency 5
Marvin Lewis	Area Education Agency 6
Donna Hansen	Area Education Agency 7
Mardi Deluhery	Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency 9
Jim Kay	Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency 9
Geri Pettit	Grant Wood Area Education Agency 10
Marsha LaFollette	Grant Wood Area Education Agency 10
Jane Guy	Heartland Area Education Agency 11
Linda Appleby	Western Hills Area Education Agency 12
Cindy Miller	Loess Hills Area Education Agency 13
Cindy Baker	Southern Prairie Area Education Agency 15
Rebecca Sharp	Great River Area Education Agency 16
Marcia Bruns-Marquardt	Great River Area Education Agency 16

Local Education Agency Personnel Interviews

Terri Parker	Special education teacher, Duncombe Elementary School, Fort Dodge
Kathy Miller-Olson	Special education teacher, Duncombe Elementary School, Fort Dodge
Bob Pattee	Principal, Humboldt Junior High School
Vicki Osenbaugh	Special education teacher, Bloomfield Elementary School
Barb Phelps	Special education teacher, Morning Sun Elementary School
Kim Johnson	Special education teacher, Morning Sun Elementary School

We appreciate the assistance of all the professionals identified above who shared their time, experience and insights about parent involvement. We hope this report proves helpful to Iowa educators as we expand our understanding of how to effectively implement educational innovations designed to assist students in achieving maximum benefit from their school experience.

R.D., C.M., P.P., Y.R., and J.C.

One of the explicitly stated foundation principles of the Renewed Service Delivery System (RSDS) is to actively promote the meaningful involvement of parents in the decision-making process and subsequent delivery of services. RSDS trial site area education agencies (AEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs) have developed a variety of methods and strategies for operationalizing this principle.

This "State of the Art" study represents an effort to gain an increased understanding of the nature and extent of parent involvement in the RSDS process. Data were gathered from AEA and LEA respondents via structured telephone interviews. This report summarizes information obtained from 22 interviews: 16 AEA personnel and 6 LEA personnel. Respondents, identified by AEA Directors of Special Education, were selected because of their experience with a variety of parent involvement activities. AEA respondents were sent a copy of interview questions in advance to prepare for the telephone interviews. LEA respondents were forwarded a list of discussion topics that would be the focus of the interview prior to the call.

Information is organized into four sections: (a) Parent involvement: definition, philosophy, model, and terminology, (b) Participation of parents in RSDS development, (c) Parent involvement effects, and (d) Challenges and future directions. Interview responses are summarized and synthesized in each section.

A. Parent Involvement: Definition, Philosophy, Model, and Terminology

1. **Definitions and descriptions of parent involvement are included in a variety of LEA and AEA written materials.** Six of the twelve AEAs responding indicated that AEA or LEA materials included explicit definitions of parent involvement. These definitions are included in RSDS procedural manuals and other documents, such as those describing building plan format and processes.
2. **There appears to be a common philosophy among the AEAs and LEAs regarding parent involvement.** AEAs and LEAs included in the study indicated that there is a commonly held belief that parent involvement in all aspects of RSDS development and implementation is critical. Comments from those interviewed suggest there is a strong desire to develop meaningful partnerships with parents. One respondent noted in particular the interest in establishing informal, friendly, and personal communication with parents.
3. **Most AEAs do not provide LEAs with a particular model for involving parents in RSDS.** Eight of the twelve AEAs included in the study indicated that there is not a particular model promoted for involving parents; however, there are numerous provisions for involving parents in the problem-solving process, development and implementation of building plans, staff development programs, and so on.
4. **Many different terms are used to refer to parent involvement.** Some AEAs reported they use other descriptors when referring to parent involvement, for example, parent participation, parent support, parent partnerships, or collaborative communication.

B. Participation of Parents in RSDS Development

5. **AEA Parent Coordinators have a high level of participation in the development and implementation of RSDS.** Respondents from 11 of the 12 AEAs included in the study indicated that the Parent Coordinator participates in a variety of RSDS development activities, such as being a member of the RSDS Core Committee or staff development presenter, and reviewing building plans.
6. **Parents are involved directly in the development of RSDS building plans.** Most AEAs (nine of the twelve included in the study) *encourage* LEAs to involve parents in the development of building plans and some (six of the twelve AEAs included) *require* districts to involve parents in this process.
7. **Parents are involved in a variety of RSDS-related activities.** AEA and LEA personnel interviewed indicated that parents are involved in building plan advisory and review committees, RSDS planning meetings and conferences, staff development sessions, and so on.
8. **Communication with parents and enhancement of the quality of their participation are achieved through the use of a variety of strategies and materials.** AEA and LEA personnel interviewed indicated that materials such as student handbooks, letters to parents, newsletters (including Parent-Educator Connection project newsletters), workshops, and parent "tip sheets," are utilized.

C. Parent Involvement Effects

9. **There is a general perception that the *quality* of parent involvement has increased with the implementation of RSDS.** Twelve respondents, representing eight AEAs, said they believed the quality of parent involvement has increased with RSDS implementation. LEA respondents appear less convinced, with four of six respondents believing there has been no change in the quality of parent involvement. None of those interviewed believed that the quality had decreased.
10. **There is a general perception that the *level* of parent involvement has increased with the implementation of RSDS.** Fifteen respondents, representing nine AEAs, said they believed the level of parent involvement has increased with RSDS implementation. Three LEA respondents believe there has been no change in the level of parent involvement. None of those interviewed believed that the level had decreased.
11. **There is a general perception that current practices for involving parents are only moderately effective.** The perceived effectiveness of current practices was rated by 19 LEA and AEA respondents at an overall average of 3.47 on a 5-point scale, with 5 being "highly effective" and 1 being "highly ineffective."
12. **Respondents identified the following positive outcomes that are apparent when effective parent involvement is being implemented.**
 - Increased options for how to respond to students' needs
 - Relationships between parents and professionals appear to be friendly partnerships
 - Better planning which results in more successes
 - Parent-professional trust levels are high
 - Students are more likely to be served in less restrictive environments
 - Children have positive attitudes towards learning

- High levels of teamwork
- Parents are open and confident communicators
- Frequent parent attendance at meetings concerning their child
- Parents support school and staff
- Parents act and feel as if they are members of school teams
- Problem-solving efforts are innovative
- Parent support of educational initiatives would be enhanced
- Teachers have an enhanced understanding of how each family is unique
- Parents are present and active in local school building activities
- Parents feel welcome—the school has an inviting climate

D. Challenges and Responses

13. **AEA and LEA respondents offered the following observations regarding challenges to effective parent involvement and responses that can address these challenges.**

Challenges	Responses
Scheduling meetings at a time that is workable for parents and educators.	Businesses need to be involved to support flex-time for working parents. Lunch-time meetings and Saturday meetings can be considered.
Creating a comfortable climate for both parents and teachers.	Invite parents to school for more informal activities. Emphasize the importance of teamwork and the critical nature of information that parents have about their child.
Focusing on family strengths.	Support teams in recognizing the importance of this and in using these strengths.
Giving parents parenting skills/tools to support them in becoming stronger parents.	Offer training in conjunction with other high-interest, school-based activities.
With changing families and neighborhoods, there are fewer natural support networks for families.	Further develop the role of the school in the community as a center for supporting families.

E. Future Actions

1. The Department of Education, in consultation with the AEA Directors of Special Education, will work on an ongoing basis with institutions of higher learning to facilitate the inclusion of curriculum that addresses principles and practices essential to establishing meaningful involvement of parents in all aspects of the special education process.
2. The Department of Education, in consultation with AEA Directors of Special Education, will develop a set of recommended practices for involving parents in the special education process. These recommendations will be developed by November 1992 and distributed to AEA and LEA personnel.
3. The Department of Education and the AEA Directors of Special Education will assure that quality involvement of parents will occur through all programs, initiatives and training efforts.

Summary: State of the Art Survey

Prereferral Interventions

**Renewed Service Delivery System (RSDS)
*Research Report #17***

**Larry Keele, Director of Special Education, Southern Prairie AEA 15
Dee Ann Wilson, Consultant, Bureau of Special Education
Gerard Gritzmacher, Consultant, Bureau of Special Education**

Iowa Department of Education

May 1992

Acknowledgments

The authors of this "State of the Art" report would like to express their gratitude to all the area education agency (AEA) and local education agency (LEA) staff members who participated. The participants demonstrated the professionalism and caring that has made the education system in Iowa the best in the nation.

Area Education Agency Personnel Interviews

John McClure	Keystone Area Education Agency 1
Rupert Kneef	Keystone Area Education Agency 1
Mark Shepp	Northern Trails Area Education Agency 2
Jim Quinn	Lakeland Area Education Agency 3
Ralph Schulte	Arrowhead Area Education Agency 5
Neta Stevenson	Area Education Agency 6
Deb Molitor	Area Education Agency 6
Jim Stoycheff	Area Education Agency 7
Cheryl McCullagh	Area Education Agency 7
Gloria Tollefson	Area Education Agency 7
Ed Hunt	Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency 9
Dick Tucker	Heartland Area Education Agency 11
David Happe	Western Hills Area Education Agency 12
Deb Schwiesow	Loess Hills Area Education Agency 13
Laurie Thies	Loess Hills Area Education Agency 13
Mike Peters	Southern Prairie Area Education Agency 15
Richard Herelin	Great River Area Education Agency 16
Linda Brock	Great River Area Education Agency 16
Luann Glaser	Great River Area Education Agency 16

Local Education Agency Personnel Interviews

Coleen Deneffe	Special education teacher, Douma Elementary, Ottumwa
Joan Wallin	Special education teacher, Fonda Elementary and Middle Schools
Kathy Brugman	Special education teacher, Laurens-Marathon Middle School
Dan Branuschwig	Principal, Laurens-Marathon Elementary and Middle Schools
Cheryl Rotert Grether	Special education teacher, Davis Elementary, Grinnell-Newburg
Sheila Adamson	Special education teacher, Dallas Center-Grimes Elementary School
Susan Moritz	Special education teacher, Willowbrook Elementary, Southeast Polk
Anita Hill	Special education teacher, Denmark Elementary, Fort Madison

We appreciate the assistance of all the professionals identified above who shared their time, experience and insights. We hope this report proves helpful to Iowa educators as we expand our understanding of how to effectively implement educational innovations designed to assist students in achieving maximum benefit from their school experience.

L.K., D.W., and G.G.

Summary: State of the Art Survey Prereferral Interventions

Trial sites participating in the Renewed Service Delivery System (RSDS) have used prereferral interventions to meet students' needs in the general education classroom. This "State of the Art" study describes the planning and implementation of prereferral intervention activities within the RSDS sites.

Data were gathered from area education agency (AEA) and local education agency (LEA) respondents using structured telephone interviews. Respondents, chosen by AEA Directors of Special Education because they were considered to be associated with exemplary examples of prereferral intervention practices, were provided a copy of the questionnaire to review before the telephone interview. Interviews were conducted with nineteen AEA personnel and eight LEA personnel.

Information in this executive summary is organized into seven sections: (a) Defining and describing the prereferral system, (b) Participants, (c) Operational considerations, (d) Effectiveness, (e) Outcomes, (f) Barriers, and (g) Future actions.

A. Defining and Describing the Prereferral System

1. Respondents reported a variety of terms used in their LEAs and AEAs to describe prereferral activities. Eighteen of the nineteen AEA respondents and seven of the eight LEA respondents indicated that other terms were used to describe prereferral interventions. Terms used included intervention plan, prior intervention, and problem-solving assessment. The comments of the respondents indicated a concern regarding the use of the term "prereferral" to describe these interventions. Using interventions to meet a student's needs in the general education classroom was viewed by the respondents as a goal in itself, and not as a prerequisite step in a referral or placement process.
2. Prereferral interventions and prereferral procedures were defined in school building plans and AEA support staff program manuals. Twelve of the nineteen AEA respondents indicated that prereferral procedures were defined in support staff manuals. Two of the eight LEA respondents indicated that prereferral interventions were explicitly defined in a written document. Descriptions of programs such as problem-solving, child study teams, and teacher assistance teams were used to define prereferral activities and procedures within the school building plans and AEA program manuals. Eight of the twenty-seven respondents commented that defining prereferral activities and procedures to all school staff members increased the collaborative effort between the general and special education staff. A common understanding of prereferral activities also was viewed as increasing the effectiveness of the prereferral intervention activities.

B. Participants

3. AEA support staff members, special education teachers, general education teachers, and LEA administrators were found to be frequently involved in the development of prereferral

interventions. Respondents were asked to rate the involvement of AEA and LEA personnel in the prereferral activities on the following scale: 1=frequently, 2=sometimes, 3=seldom, and 4=never. Rated as "frequently" involved were: AEA support staff members (by 24 of the 27 respondents), special education teachers and general education teachers (by 19 respondents), and LEA administrators (by 14 respondents). Twelve of the respondents commented that the inclusion of LEA administrators and general education teachers in the development of prereferral interventions was critical to the success and acceptance of the prereferral process.

4. **Chapter 1 teachers, guidance counselors, and at-risk program staff members were reported as having less involvement in the development of prereferral interventions.** Respondents were asked to rate the involvement of AEA and LEA personnel in prereferral interventions on the following scale: 1=frequently, 2=sometimes, 3=seldom, and 4=never. Rated as "never" involved were: Chapter 1 teachers (by 21 of the 27 respondents), guidance counselors (by 16 respondents), and the at-risk program staff (by 15 respondents). Eleven commented that these personnel often did not have the time to be involved in the prereferral process. Comments on the importance of including these personnel were mixed. Seven respondents noted that the involvement of these personnel would depend on the particular needs of the individual student, and five commented that guidance counselors should be involved with any student with special needs.
5. **Parents were reported as being sometimes involved in the development of prereferral interventions.** Respondents were asked to rate the involvement of AEA and LEA personnel in prereferral interventions on the following scale: 1=frequently, 2=sometimes, 3=seldom, and 4=never. Twelve of the twenty-seven respondents reported that parents were sometimes involved in the development of prereferral interventions. A relationship was found in the data collected between the way that parents were informed that a prereferral intervention was being used with their child and the parent's level of involvement. When parents were informed about the prereferral intervention through a parent-teacher meeting or a meeting with the school prereferral team, the respondents reported that the parents were active participants in the planning and evaluation of prereferral activities. When no information or informal communication was provided to parents concerning prereferral activities, respondents reported that parents were not involved or were not active participants in the prereferral interventions.
6. **AEA support staff members, special education teachers and AEA administrators were reported as the moving force in the development of prereferral interventions.** Eleven of nineteen AEA respondents and three of eight LEA respondents reported that the AEA support staff was the moving force in the development of prereferral interventions in their AEAs and LEAs. Twelve of the total respondents commented that leadership and support from the AEA were critical in the implementation of a successful prereferral intervention process. Six of the AEA respondents reported AEA administrators were the moving force for prereferral interventions in their AEAs. Five of the LEA respondents indicated that special education teachers were the moving force for prereferral interventions in their schools. Fourteen of the total respondents commented that support and participation from the LEA administration was important to maintain and further develop the prereferral process.

C. Operational Considerations

7. **Prereferral interventions frequently contained behavioral definitions, a written plan for implementation, and information on the effect of the intervention on the targeted behavior.** Respondents were asked to report on the use of quality indices of prereferral interventions on a 4-point scale (always, used in 100% of prereferral interventions; frequently, used in 70 to 99% of prereferral interventions; sometimes, used in 40 to 69% of prereferral interventions; and infrequently, used in less than 39% of prereferral interventions). Ten of the nineteen AEA respondents and four of the eight LEA respondents indicated that 70 to 99% of their prereferral interventions included behavioral definitions, a written plan for implementation, and information on the effect of the

intervention on the targeted behavior. Eleven of the twenty-seven total respondents commented that there was a correlation between the frequency with which the intervention teams collected data and the efficiency of the prereferral intervention. Eleven respondents also commented that the ability of staff members to plan and collect data was a critical factor in the effectiveness of prereferral interventions.

8. **The collection of baseline data, the maintenance of the integrity of the intervention, and a comparison to baseline data were incorporated in an average of 40 to 69% of prereferral interventions.** Respondents were asked to report on the use of quality indices of prereferral interventions on a 4-point scale (always, used in 100% of prereferral interventions; frequently, used in 70 to 99% of prereferral interventions; sometimes, used in 40 to 69% of prereferral interventions; infrequently, used in less than 39% of prereferral interventions). Time factors and a lack of data-collection skills were reported as reasons why baseline data was not collected. Three respondents indicated that the collection of baseline data and the maintenance of the integrity of the intervention were not related to the efficiency of the prereferral intervention.
9. **LEA respondents reported that they spent an average of one hour per week on the development, implementation and evaluation of prereferral interventions.** Six of the eight LEA respondents reported that they spent time each week on prereferral interventions. Of these six, four reported spending an hour each week on prereferral interventions. One LEA respondent reported spending two to three hours per week, and one LEA respondent reported spending thirty minutes per week. Two of the eight LEA respondents indicated that they did not spend any time on a weekly basis on prereferral interventions.
10. **LEA respondents reported that their prereferral intervention team usually met on a weekly or biweekly basis.** Six of the eight LEA respondents indicated that their prereferral teams met on a regular basis. Three of these five reported meeting on a weekly basis, and two on a biweekly basis. Two of the eight LEA respondents indicated that their school buildings did not have a prereferral intervention team.

D. Effectiveness

11. **LEA respondents reported that the AEAs had provided useful training on prereferral interventions.** Five of the eight LEA respondents reported that they had participated in AEA training on prereferral interventions and had found that training to be useful. Three respondents said that their AEAs had offered training on prereferral interventions but that they had not attended the training.
12. **A majority of LEA respondents reported that their LEAs did not offer training on prereferral interventions.** Six of the eight LEA respondents indicated that training on prereferral interventions was not offered by their LEA. Two reported that their LEAs had offered training on prereferral interventions; they also said that they had attended the LEA training and found it to be useful.
13. **Prereferral interventions were rated as being toward the "highly effective" end of a 6-point scale.** Respondents were asked to report on the effectiveness of the prereferral interventions on a 6-point scale (with 1 being "highly effective" and 6 being "highly ineffective"). The average of the respondents' answers was 1.9, suggesting that prereferral interventions were considered by the respondents to be highly effective. Fourteen of nineteen AEA respondents reported that prereferral interventions were highly effective in their AEAs. All LEA respondents indicated that their prereferral interventions were highly effective.

Twenty-two of the twenty-seven total respondents commented that support from the AEA administration, LEA administration, AEA support staff, general education teachers, and special education teachers was an element of effective prereferral interventions. Twelve of the respondents

indicated that the ability to implement effective prereferral interventions was related to the skills that intervention team members possessed in defining the student's behavior, collecting baseline data, developing a written intervention plan, maintaining the integrity of the intervention, and monitoring the effectiveness of the intervention. Parental support was also viewed by four respondents as a necessary part of successful interventions. Two respondents noted that the flexibility of a prereferral intervention plan, and not the collection of behavioral data, was critical in the development of effective interventions.

14. AEA and LEAs reported that a procedure or a strategy was in place to evaluate the effectiveness of prereferral interventions with individual students. Thirteen of nineteen AEA respondents and five of eight LEA respondents indicated that a procedure was in place to evaluate the effectiveness of prereferral interventions with individual students. Twelve of the twenty-seven respondents reported that the procedure for evaluating the effectiveness of prereferral interventions with individual students was included as part of an AEA form used to develop prereferral interventions. Five respondents indicated that the evaluation of prereferral interventions for individual school buildings and the AEA as a whole was becoming part of their prereferral process. Five of the AEA respondents reported that the monthly or year-end reports of their AEA support staff included information on the development and effectiveness of prereferral interventions.

E. Outcomes

15. An outcome of effective prereferral interventions was the improvement of collaboration among special education teachers, general education teachers, and AEA support staff members in meeting the needs of students within the general education classroom. Sixteen of the nineteen AEA respondents reported that school buildings were making more effective use of all their resources when a prereferral intervention team operated within the school. Seven of the eight LEA respondents reported that collaboration among teachers and AEA support staff members had increased due to effective prereferral interventions.
16. LEA and AEA respondents reported that local buildings were more willing to work with students with special needs in the general education classroom when prereferral activities were implemented. Fourteen of the nineteen AEA respondents and five of the eight LEA respondents reported that buildings were more willing to work with students with special needs in the general education classroom when prereferral activities were implemented. Thirteen of the twenty-seven respondents commented that schools were taking more responsibility to educate all their students when an effective program of prereferral interventions was in place. Ten respondents commented that the number of placements outside of a school building decreased when prereferral interventions were implemented as part of the building plan.
17. Effective prereferral interventions improved the skills of general education and special education teachers in serving students with special needs. Fourteen of the nineteen AEA respondents and five of the eight LEA respondents reported that the skill level of general and special education teachers to make accommodations in the general education classroom for students with special needs increased because of the prereferral intervention process.
18. An outcome of effective prereferral interventions was an improvement in the attitude and job satisfaction of AEA support staff members, special education teachers, and general education teachers. Twelve of the nineteen AEA respondents and five of the eight LEA respondents indicated that the increased collaboration among staff members and the success of the prereferral interventions made their jobs more satisfying and improved their attitude towards students with special needs.
19. AEA and LEAs reported mixed effects from the use of prereferral interventions on the placement rate of students into special education programs. Respondents' comments suggested that the effect of prereferral interventions on the placement rate of students into special education cannot yet be

judged. Eight of the twenty-seven respondents reported that the use of prereferral interventions had decreased the number of referrals. Eleven respondents noted that referrals and placements of students into special education seemed to be more focused on students with significant needs when the prereferral intervention process was effective. Nine of the nineteen AEA respondents reported that prereferral intervention has no measurable effect on placement into special education programs. Eight AEA respondents indicated that the use of prereferral interventions had decreased the number of students placed into special education programs. Two AEA respondents stated that the use of prereferral interventions had increased the number of students placed into special education programs.

F. Barriers

20. Insufficient time to plan and implement prereferral interventions was reported as a barrier to their development. Twenty-five of the twenty-seven respondents reported that finding common planning time to work on prereferral interventions was extremely difficult. Two of the LEA respondents commented that they were relieving their intervention team of recess or lunch duties to provide a common work time. Twelve AEA respondents and seven LEA respondents commented that the scheduling of consistent and common planning time for intervention teams was seen as critical in the development of an effective prereferral intervention process.
21. Staff attitudes toward working with students with special needs in the general education classroom were reported as a barrier to the development of an effective intervention process. Thirteen of the twenty-seven respondents noted that the promotion of collaboration between special education and general education staff members was a significant change from the assessment philosophy of the last twenty years. These respondents indicated that the belief that students with special needs are the responsibility of special education programs has hindered the development of effective interventions in the general education classroom for students with special needs. Eleven respondents suggested that time to assimilate the change in philosophy and more staff training were needed to develop a positive attitude toward making accommodations within the general education classroom for students with special needs.
22. Lack of skills in serving students with behavioral needs in the general education classroom was seen as a barrier in the development of effective prereferral interventions. Eleven of the twenty-seven respondents indicated that staff development in assessing students' needs and developing interventions would improve the quality of prereferral interventions.
23. Increased paperwork for staff members involved with prereferral interventions was seen as a barrier to the development of an effective prereferral intervention process. Eleven of the nineteen AEA respondents reported that paperwork had increased under RSDS in general and for intervention team members in particular. Four of the eight LEA respondents also indicated that paperwork had increased. Six of the twenty-seven respondents commented that efficient and short forms to plan and record intervention data would help the paperwork problem. Three respondents also suggested that sharing the paperwork load among the team members would help.

G. Future Actions

Effective prereferral interventions within a school building lead to positive outcomes for students, teachers and AEA staff members. Survey participants reported that general and special education teachers work together more efficiently to serve the special needs of students within the general education classroom when effective prereferral interventions are in place. School staff members were reported as taking more responsibility to educate all their students when prereferral interventions were effectively implemented. Respondents also indicated that school buildings were making more effective

use of all their resources when efficient prereferral teams operated within the school. Finally, effective prereferral interventions were reported as improving the attitude and job satisfaction of AEA and LEA staff members. These positive outcomes should encourage AEAs and LEAs to continue to implement effective prereferral interventions.

The following are some future actions to improve the effectiveness of prereferral interventions during the 1992-1993 school year:

1. Time for collaborative efforts needed to implement effective prereferral interventions should be included in staff schedules. Respondents indicated that finding common planning time to work on prereferral interventions was extremely difficult. LEA and AEA administrative support in the scheduling of consistent and common planning time for intervention teams was seen as critical. A survey of staff needs for collaborative work time should be completed by LEA and AEA administrators, and options for establishing common planning times should be developed and piloted at selected school districts.
2. Functional paperwork that supports effective prereferral interventions without unnecessary impositions on staff schedules should be developed. Survey respondents indicated that paperwork has increased under RSDS in general and for intervention team members in particular. The RSDS core committee should discuss the purpose and necessary elements of prereferral paperwork. A survey of intervention teams should be completed by the Bureau of Special Education to identify examples of efficient paperwork that supports the process of effective prereferral interventions. These examples should be reviewed by a team of LEA, AEA, and Bureau staff members, and a report summarizing the purposes and best practices of paperwork for prereferral interventions should be disseminated to intervention teams through the AEAs.
3. Skills in serving students with behavioral needs in the general education classroom should be improved. Respondents indicated that staff development is needed in assessing students' behavioral needs and developing interventions within the general education classroom. Behavioral intervention programs at selected school buildings should be studied. Effective interventions for students with behavioral needs should be identified. Staff development activities should be planned and implemented to train staff members in the effective components of behavioral interventions. One focus of the training should be to improve the skills of staff members concerning the collection of baseline data, the maintenance of the integrity of the intervention, and comparing intervention results to baseline data.
4. Funding to support effective prereferral interventions should be studied. Alternative funding systems should be studied by a team of AEA and Bureau staff members. Funding systems that are based on the needs of students rather than on the number of students placed into special education programs should be discussed. A financial system that supports the activities of prereferral intervention teams based on the needs of the students they serve should be investigated by the Bureau.
5. The characteristics of effective prereferral intervention teams should be studied. The Bureau should encourage a study of the characteristics of members of effective prereferral intervention teams. The use of local resources by effective prereferral intervention teams should also be studied. A paper summarizing the characteristics and best practices of effective prereferral intervention teams should be developed and disseminated through the AEAs.

Summary: State of the Art Survey

Progress Monitoring

Renewed Service Delivery System (RSDS) Research Report #18

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Iowa Department of Education

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Acknowledgments

the Area Education Agency (AEA) Directors of Special Education, who d local education agency personnel to be interviewed for this study of s also to James Stumme, Assistant Director of Special Education, Heartland conducting some of the interviews.

ncy Personnel Interviews

Lakeland Area Education Agency 3
Arrowhead Area Education Agency 5
Area Education Agency 6
Area Education Agency 6
Heartland Area Education Agency 11
Heartland Area Education Agency 11
Heartland Area Education Agency 11
Heartland Area Education Agency 11
Western Hills Area Education Agency 12
Loess Hills Area Education Agency 13
Loess Hills Area Education Agency 13
Southern Prairie Area Education Agency 15
Great River Area Education Agency 16
Great River Area Education Agency 16

ncy Personnel

Special education teacher, Lincoln Elementary School, Clear Lake
Special education teacher, North Kossuth Community Schools
Special education teacher, Odebolt-Arthur Elementary School
Special education teacher, West Elementary School, North Polk
Special education teacher, Tama Primary School, South Tama County
Special education teacher, Pocahontas Area Elementary School
Special education teacher, Audubon Middle School
Special education teacher, Adel-DeSoto Elementary School
Special education teacher, Hoover Elementary School, Council Bluffs
Special education teacher, Harmony Elementary School

of all the professionals identified above who shared their time, experience monitoring. We hope this report proves helpful to Iowa educators as we id application of progress-monitoring activities in an effort to improve the state's children and youth.

T. B., T. W., D. W., & J. R.

Summary: State of the Art Survey Progress Monitoring

Monitoring of student performance is one of the areas that the Renewed Service Delivery System (RSDS) initiative has targeted for improvement. Identified as "progress monitoring," the improvement area emphasizes direct and frequent assessment of student progress for the purpose of making timely decisions about the impact of intervention efforts. This study was undertaken to gain an understanding of the nature and extent of progress-monitoring activities in RSDS trial sites.

Information for the survey was gathered through structured telephone interviews with area education agency (AEA) and local education agency (LEA) personnel. Respondents were sent a copy of the interview questions in advance to prepare for the interviews. Respondents, identified by AEA Directors of Special Education, were selected because of their experience with progress monitoring.

This report summarizes the information obtained from 24 interviews: 14 AEA personnel and 10 LEA personnel, representing nine AEAs. The report is organized into five sections: (a) Description and training; (b) Extent of implementation and Operational considerations; (c) Barriers and benefits; (d) Effectiveness, Future plans and advice; (e) Future actions.

A. Description and Training

1. **Progress monitoring is most frequently described in AEA materials or LEA building plans.** Descriptions of progress monitoring are most frequently found in AEA training materials and procedure manuals. Some respondents also indicated that information about progress monitoring can be found in LEA building plans, newsletters, and monographs.
2. **AEAs tend to provide options or alternatives for monitoring student performance that districts and buildings can use.** Seven AEA respondents representing four different AEAs reported that the AEA approach to progress monitoring was to provide districts with options or alternatives that could be implemented. Two AEA respondents representing the same AEA reported that the AEA uses a specific model of progress monitoring; two other respondents representing the same AEA reported that the AEA describes the essential elements of progress monitoring independent of specific models or alternatives. The respondents from one AEA differed in their perception of the AEA's approach. One AEA respondent did not provide a specific response on this point.
3. **Respondents identified a wide range of elements or components that they determined as critical to their progress-monitoring efforts.** The most frequently identified elements that respondents reported as essential to their progress-monitoring activities were [1] goal statement, [2] behavior definition, [3] charting or graphing, [4] baseline or current performance, [5] decision-making, and [6] regular data collection.
4. **While training opportunities in progress monitoring have been provided to LEA and AEA personnel, additional training opportunities are needed.** All the LEA respondents indicated that they have been trained to use progress monitoring, with most of the training being provided through the AEAs by AEA personnel. Seven of the ten LEA respondents and twelve of the fourteen AEA

respondents indicated that additional training opportunities were needed. The additional opportunities should focus on the full breadth of training needs—initial training for non-users, training to advance and enhance the skills of beginners, and follow-up and technical assistance for experienced implementers. In addition, both LEA and AEA respondents identified specific training or support needs that would enhance or advance their use of progress monitoring. These specific needs ranged from training and assistance in using available computer software programs to support in training general education teachers.

5. **The length of training and the type of follow-up to training that respondents have received varied greatly.** The length or amount of training provided by the AEAs varied from one to two hours for a few respondents to training programs of two days. Several respondents reported extended training opportunities that were in addition to and independent of the training provided through the AEA. The most frequently reported AEA training effort was one to one-and-one-half days in length. Half the LEA respondents reported follow-up activities as part of the training effort, while AEA respondents reported that almost all training efforts included follow-up activities. The reported follow-up activities appear to occur through routine support staff building contacts and are not systematic, well-defined, or necessarily specific to progress monitoring.

B. Extent of Implementation & Operational Considerations

6. **Teachers are more apt to be implementing progress monitoring with students than are AEA support personnel.** Progress monitoring is more consistently and more frequently used with academic behaviors than non-academic behaviors. All LEA respondents and five AEA respondents reported direct use of progress monitoring with students. It should be noted that two of the fourteen AEA respondents were management staff who did not have student caseloads. Academic behaviors (that is, reading fluency, math facts, written expression and spelling) and readiness skills were most frequently cited as the target behaviors of progress-monitoring activities. The most frequently mentioned non-academic behaviors were on-task behavior and assignment completion. It should also be noted that several LEA respondents noted difficulties in using progress monitoring with non-academic behaviors.
7. **The extent of implementation of progress monitoring varies greatly by individual educator and by building.** LEA respondents' implementation of progress monitoring ranges from use with all students on caseload (up to 36 students) to use with a limited number of students on caseload or to one academic area. AEA respondents' implementation reflected a similar range. While implementation beyond special education personnel is extremely limited, both AEA and LEA respondents reported that some general education teachers and Chapter 1 teachers are involved with progress monitoring. All AEA respondents indicated that they were working in at least one building where progress-monitoring activities are occurring.
8. **Progress-monitoring efforts appear to be focused at the elementary and middle school levels, with special education teachers as the most frequently identified implementers.** With one exception (a K-12 resource teacher), the LEA respondents participating in this study were from elementary or middle schools. In addition, when LEA and AEA respondents were asked to identify exemplary or expert users of progress monitoring, no secondary level teachers or other secondary level district staff members were identified.
9. **Both LEA and AEA respondents indicated that standards are used to establish desired performance criteria in their progress-monitoring efforts.** The most frequently reported guides or standards that support personnel and teachers use to establish performance criteria are (in order of frequency) local norms, teacher-defined, and peer performance.
10. **Progress monitoring typically includes creating a visual display of student progress through graphs.** All LEA and AEA respondents involved in direct use of progress monitoring with students

reported that they graphed student progress data. Ten of the fourteen AEA respondents also reported that they were supporting teachers who routinely graphed progress-monitoring data. Equal-interval graphs were identified by respondents as the most frequently used graphs for charting student performance.

11. **Progress-monitoring data is used to make decisions about the educational programs of students.** LEA and AEA respondents identified a very extensive list of applications for the data generated through progress-monitoring activities. Most of the cited applications fell into two broad categories, however: [1] to determine the effectiveness of the intervention or instructional plan; and [2] to explain student progress to parents, students and other teachers (parent-teacher conferences, annual reviews, etc.).
12. **Students have a limited role in the monitoring and charting of their own progress.** A majority of respondents indicated that students were not directly responsible for monitoring their own performance (data collection) or recording results (graphing or charting). Most respondents noted, however, that students are aware of their goals and whether progress is being made, and are provided the opportunity to review and discuss their progress.
13. **Parent involvement with progress monitoring is most likely to be as a recipient of information about student performance.** LEA and AEA respondents indicated that the primary role of parents is that of receiver of progress-monitoring data through conferences and meetings. Only two respondents reported that parents were involved in collecting and graphing student performance data.
14. **There is limited use of computer software programs designed to facilitate progress-monitoring efforts.** Only three LEA respondents and four AEA respondents indicated that they are using computer software programs as part of their progress-monitoring activities. The most frequently cited reasons for the limited use of software programs are: [1] incompatibility of available software and hardware; [2] lack of training to use software; and [3] lack of opportunity to develop proficiency in use of software.
15. **The use of progress monitoring is not widespread among teachers or support personnel.** LEA respondents reported limited use of progress monitoring by other individuals in their building and district. AEA respondents also reported limited use of progress monitoring by support personnel.

C. Barriers and Benefits

16. **Respondents identified a variety of challenges in implementing progress-monitoring activities and possible solutions to these challenges.** For special education teachers, the most frequently mentioned challenge was finding the time needed for progress monitoring. The potential solutions identified by the teachers included increased manpower (the use of paraprofessionals, volunteers, and students) and establishing a routine schedule for progress-monitoring activities. The second most frequently noted challenge that special education teachers identified was general education staff; because of a lack of understanding of progress monitoring, a difference in philosophy, or viewing progress monitoring as a "special education" activity rather than as sound educational practice. For AEA personnel, time was also the most frequently cited challenge to successful implementation of progress-monitoring efforts. AEA personnel offered increased use of paraprofessionals or volunteers, increased student responsibility for various progress-monitoring activities, greater administrative support and involvement, and redefinition of roles as potential solutions to the "time" barrier.
17. **Progress-monitoring efforts do have a positive influence on students.** Respondents identified a significant number of student benefits from collaboration programs. The most frequently cited

benefits were involvement and ownership in learning, impact on student motivation, awareness of goals, and immediate feedback on performance.

18. **Progress monitoring provides the opportunity for more frequent reports of progress to parents, and provides parents with a view of student performance over time.** Respondents noted that progress-monitoring activities provide very specific and easily understood information about student performance.
19. **Progress monitoring also provides benefits to teachers and support personnel.** Just as respondents were able to identify a menu of benefits to students, they identified a significant list of benefits to teachers and support personnel. The most frequently cited benefits were: [1] Provides an objective data-base for making decisions about interventions. [2] Frequent measurement of student progress provides more timely decisions about the effectiveness of the instructional plan. [3] Provides better and more convincing explanations of student performance for parents.

D. Effectiveness, Future Plans and Advice

20. **Formalized evaluation of the effectiveness of progress monitoring is limited.** Only one AEA has an established procedure for evaluating the implementation of progress-monitoring activities. Ten of the AEA respondents and seven of the LEA respondents reported that they did not have a specific procedure for evaluating the effectiveness of progress-monitoring efforts. However, 13 of these respondents indicated that there should be specific evaluation efforts.
21. **Both LEA and AEA respondents described progress monitoring as effective.** With but two exceptions, LEA and AEA respondents reported that progress monitoring was an effective tool for improved programming. In the words of one teacher, progress monitoring is "really effective – helps to know where the students are, motivates students, keeps teacher on task." Or, in the words of an AEA staff member, progress monitoring is "essential to changing behaviors; we are talking more knowledgeably about students and where they are; we know where we are headed; we'll have more success in the future."
22. **Current progress-monitoring efforts not only will continue, but will expand.** Seven of the ten LEA respondents indicated that they have plans to expand their progress-monitoring activities. It should be noted that one of the LEA individuals responding "no" on this point was already using progress monitoring with all the students on her caseload, and the only opportunity she had for expanding was to assist other teachers in the building. Five of the LEA respondents also indicated that their district or building had plans for increasing the use of progress monitoring. In one of the "no" responses to this point, it was noted that the district had achieved "full implementation." In another "no" response, the special education teacher noted that she had achieved full implementation, but that there was limited use by other classroom teachers, with no plans for increasing their use of progress monitoring. Nine of the fourteen AEA respondents (representing seven AEAs) indicated that their AEAs had plans to expand the use of progress monitoring across the AEA.
23. **Respondents offered the following advice to individuals contemplating a systematic and extensive use of progress monitoring.** Start small. As proficiency with procedures increases, gradually expand efforts to include more students and more skill and content areas.
24. **AEA personnel offered the following advice to other area education agencies in terms of implementing and supporting progress monitoring with teachers and support personnel.** Training that goes beyond awareness and provides follow-up and support to implementers is essential. Be sure the AEA is prepared to provide the one-to-one support that is needed to assure successful implementation.

E. Future Actions

1. The Department of Education, in cooperation with personnel from AEA trial sites and RSDS research personnel, will develop an evaluation process that trial sites could use to assess the effectiveness of progress-monitoring activities. This effort needs to be coordinated with the activities of the RSDS research coordinators and the Department's work on the special education information management system.
2. The Coordinating Council on the Assessment of Student Performance (CCASP), an RSDS committee that focuses on student assessment and has representation of support and instructional personnel from each AEA, is the appropriate forum to address the following concerns:
 - a. Development of specific activities and strategies that will increase implementation and support of progress-monitoring efforts at the secondary level;
 - b. Development of specific strategies that emphasize follow-up activities as an integral part of staff development on progress monitoring, and that provide support and technical assistance to personnel during implementation;
 - c. Development of strategies or materials (1) that could be used to broaden the use of progress monitoring by general education teachers and (2) that would help make implementation of progress monitoring more efficient.
 - d. Identification of demonstration or exemplary sites of progress monitoring that can be used as model programs for visitation and review by others.
3. The Department, in cooperation with AEA trial site leadership and management personnel, should reinforce and support AEA staff use of progress monitoring through staff development and supervision activities. The CCASP should be consulted for ideas that could be used to facilitate support staff use of progress monitoring.
4. The Department of Education and AEA trial site leadership should cooperate in developing a data management system that supports and reinforces progress monitoring and emphasizes student outcomes.
5. The Department of Education and AEA research coordinators will develop a council to address the potential application and benefits of progress-monitoring data to research efforts and systems-level decisions.

***Summary:
State of the Art Survey***

**Staff
Development**

**Renewed Service Delivery System (RSDS)
*Research Report #19***

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Iowa Department of Education

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Acknowledgments

The authors of this "State of the Art" report would like to express their gratitude to all the area education agency (AEA) and local education agency (LEA) staff members who participated. The participants demonstrated the professionalism and caring that has made the education system in Iowa the best in the nation.

Area Education Agency Personnel Interviews

LaVerne Mosher	Keystone Area Education Agency 1
Jeff Thomas	Lakeland Area Education Agency 3
Bev Fisher	Arrowhead Area Education Agency 5
Helen Beneke	Arrowhead Area Education Agency 5
Dennis Feddersen	Arrowhead Area Education Agency 5
Eileen Carroll	Arrowhead Area Education Agency 5
Mary Mack	Area Education Agency 6
Neta Stevenson	Area Education Agency 6
Dennis Sinclair	Area Education Agency 7
Frank Darrah	Area Education Agency 7
David Quinn	Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency 9
Deb Preisser	Grant Wood Area Education Agency 10
Fran Long	Heartland Area Education Agency 11
Julie Schendel	Heartland Area Education Agency 11
Gene Behrens	Heartland Area Education Agency 11
Lana Michelson	Heartland Area Education Agency 11
Linda Miller	Heartland Area Education Agency 11
Judith Keith	Western Hills Area Education Agency 12
Norma Lou Eitemiller	Loess Hills Area Education Agency 13
Roger Hartman	Loess Hills Area Education Agency 13
Russ Hardgrove	Southern Prairie Area Education Agency 15
Sue Palmer	Southern Prairie Area Education Agency 15
Joan Morningstar	Great River Area Education Agency 16
Luann Glaser	Great River Area Education Agency 16

Local Education Agency Personnel Interviews

Kayla Reese	Resource center teacher, Gladbrook Elementary School
Tony Voss	Gifted & talented teacher, Eldora-New Providence Elementary

We appreciate the assistance of all the professionals identified above who shared their time, experience and insights. We hope this report proves helpful to Iowa educators as we expand our understanding of how to effectively implement educational innovations designed to assist students in achieving maximum benefit from their school experience.

B.M., C.J., and G.G.

Summary: State of the Art Survey Staff Development

Trial sites participating in the Renewed Service Delivery System (RSDS) have used staff development training to improve the skills of their area education agency (AEA) and local education agency (LEA) staff members in serving students with special needs. This "State of the Art" study describes the planning, implementation, barriers, and outcomes of current staff development activities within the RSDS sites.

Data was gathered from AEA and LEA respondents using structured telephone interviews. Respondents, chosen by AEA Directors of Special Education, were considered to be associated with exemplary examples of staff development practices. The twenty-four AEA personnel and two LEA personnel who were interviewed were provided a copy of the questionnaire to review before the telephone interview. The responses of the AEA and LEA participants will be reported together in this summary.

Information in this summary is organized into nine sections: (a) Defining and describing the staff development plan, (b) Planning and implementing staff development activities, (c) Inservice, (d) Participants, (e) Operational considerations, (f) Effectiveness, (g) Outcomes, (h) Barriers, and (i) Future actions.

A. Defining and Describing the Staff Development Plan

1. Respondents indicated that a majority of AEAs had developed a staff development plan concerning RSDS for the AEA special education staff. Twenty-one of the twenty-six respondents stated that the AEA had developed a staff development plan for the AEA special education staff. Nine of the respondents indicated that improving staff skills in the area of problem-solving assessment was among the top three priorities of their staff development plan. Six respondents reported that improving staff skills in progress monitoring was a priority of the staff development plan. Four respondents said that improving staff skills in the areas of collaboration, curriculum-based assessment, and awareness of RSDS were among the top three priorities of their staff development plans.
2. Staff development plans for the AEA special education staff were reported as being described in RSDS inservice plans, trial site plans, RSDS core committee plans, calendars of events, and staff needs assessment reports. Six respondents replied that staff development plans for the AEA special education staff were defined in their AEA's RSDS inservice plan. Three reported that the staff development plan was outlined in either the trial site plan, RSDS core committee plan, calendar of events, or their staff needs assessment report.
3. Respondents stated that a majority of AEAs had drafted staff development plans concerning RSDS for LEA staff members. Twenty-one of the respondents indicated that their AEA had formed a staff development plan concerning RSDS for LEA staff members. When asked to list the top three priorities represented in their plans, five replied that improving staff skills in the area of problem-solving assessment was a top priority. Four reported that improving staff skills in the areas of building assistance teams, collaboration between general and special education staff members, progress monitoring, and curriculum-based measurement were top priorities.

4. Staff development plans for LEA staff members were reported as being defined in RSDS inservice plans, trial site plans, or building plans. Four of the respondents stated that staff development plans for LEA staff members were defined in their AEA's RSDS inservice plan. Three reported that the staff development plan was outlined in either the trial site plan or building plan.

B. Planning and Implementing Staff Development Activities

5. AEA special education administrators and staff members were found to be frequently involved in the *planning* of staff development activities concerning RSDS for the AEA staff. Respondents were asked to rate the involvement of AEA and LEA personnel in the planning of staff development activities, using the following scale: 1=frequently, 2=sometimes, 3=seldom, and 4=never. Rated as "frequently" involved were AEA special education administrators (by 14 of the 26 respondents) and AEA special education staff members (by 13 respondents). Rated as "never" involved were: students (by 19 respondents), guidance counselors (by 15 respondents), AEA clerical staff members (by 14 respondents), and LEA administrators (by 8 respondents).
6. AEA special education administrators and staff members were found to be frequently involved in the *presentation* of staff development activities concerning RSDS for the AEA staff. Respondents were asked to rate the involvement of AEA and LEA personnel in the presentation of staff development activities, using the following scale: 1=frequently, 2=sometimes, 3=seldom, and 4=never. Rated as "frequently" involved were AEA special education staff members (by 17 respondents) and AEA special education administrators (by 10 respondents). Rated as "never" involved were: students (by 21 respondents), AEA clerical staff members (by 21 respondents), guidance counselors (by 18 respondents), and LEA administrators (by 15 respondents).
7. AEA special education staff members, AEA special education administrators and LEA administrators were found to be frequently involved in the *planning* of staff development activities concerning RSDS for LEA staff members. Respondents were asked to rate the involvement of AEA and LEA personnel in the planning of staff development activities on the following scale: 1=frequently, 2=sometimes, 3=seldom, and 4=never. Rated as "frequently" involved were AEA special education staff members (by 17 of the 26 respondents), AEA special education administrators (by 13 respondents), and LEA administrators (by 10 respondents). Rated as "never" involved were: students (by 23 respondents), AEA clerical staff members (by 18 respondents), and guidance counselors (by 13 respondents).
8. AEA special education staff members and administrators were found to be frequently involved in the *presentation* of staff development activities concerning RSDS for LEA staff members. Respondents were asked to rate the involvement of AEA and LEA personnel in the presentation of staff development activities on the following scale: 1=frequently, 2=sometimes, 3=seldom, and 4=never. Rated as "frequently" involved were AEA special education staff members (by 12 of the 26 respondents) and AEA special education administrators (by 8 respondents). Rated as "never" involved were: students (by 20 respondents), AEA clerical staff members (by 20 respondents), and guidance counselors (by 15 respondents).
9. AEA personnel (including administrators and special education staff members) were reported as the moving force in the area of staff development concerning RSDS in the AEA. Twelve respondents reported that AEA administrative staff members were the moving force in the planning and implementation of staff development activities concerning RSDS in their AEAs and LEAs. Seven respondents indicated that AEA special education staff members were the moving force for staff development in the AEA. Eight respondents commented that leadership and support from the AEA were critical in the implementation of a successful staff development program.
10. AEA administrative staff, staff needs assessment surveys, and staff development training teams were reported to determine the agenda for staff development activities concerning RSDS. Twenty-

one respondents indicated that the agenda for staff development was determined by the AEA administrative staff. Twenty reported that the agenda for staff development was determined through staff needs surveys. Finally, sixteen respondents said that the agenda was determined by a staff development training team.

C. Inservice

11. A majority of respondents indicated that staff development activities were offered to AEA special education staff members in the areas of problem-solving assessment (PSA), curriculum-based measurement (CBM), teaming strategies, foundations of RSDS, working with at-risk students, behavioral interventions, and academic interventions. Twenty-three of the 26 respondents stated that staff development in PSA was offered, 19 said staff development in CBM was offered, and 12 said staff development was offered in teaming strategies, foundations of RSDS, working with at-risk students, behavioral interventions, and academic interventions.
12. AEA special education staff members were reported as having high skill levels in the areas of teaming strategies and the foundations of RSDS. Twelve of the respondents indicated that AEA special education staff members had high skill levels in the areas of teaming strategies and the foundations of RSDS. Ten also reported that AEA special education staff members had low skill levels in the area of functional assessment.
13. A majority of respondents reported that staff development activities were offered to LEA staff in the areas of problem-solving assessment (PSA), curriculum-based measurement (CBM), teaming strategies, foundations of RSDS, working with at-risk students, behavioral interventions, and academic interventions. Eighteen respondents stated that staff development in PSA and CBM was offered, 17 said staff development in teaming strategies and the foundations of RSDS was offered, and 13 said staff development in behavioral interventions and academic interventions was offered.
14. LEA staff members were reported as having medium skill levels in the areas of teaming strategies, foundations of RSDS, academic interventions, and CBM. Seventeen respondents reported that LEA staff members had medium skill levels in the area of teaming strategies, 15 said LEA staff members had medium skill levels in the areas of academic interventions and CBM, and 13 said LEA staff members had medium skill levels in the area of foundations of RSDS. Thirteen stated that LEA staff members had low skill levels in the area of functional assessment, and 10 that LEA staff members had low skill levels in the area of behavioral interventions.

D. Participants

15. AEA support staff members, regular class teachers, LEA administrators and special education teachers were most often reported as participants in staff development activities concerning RSDS. Nineteen respondents indicated that AEA support staff members frequently were included as participants in staff development activities concerning RSDS; sixteen reported that general education teachers frequently participated. Thirteen respondents said that special education teachers and principals were frequently involved in staff development activities concerning RSDS. Finally, twenty reported that students were never included as participants in staff development activities concerning RSDS.

E. Operational Considerations

16. A majority of the respondents indicated that ongoing support was provided to participants attending staff development activities concerning RSDS. Fifteen respondents indicated that continuing support was provided to staff development participants. Eight respondents reported that this support was provided by the building assistance team; four reported that support was provided by either the building liaison or staff development team.
17. A majority of the respondents indicated that participants attending RSDS staff development activities were given an opportunity for guided practice in the skills taught. Sixteen respondents indicated that guided practice was provided to staff development participants. Eight reported that while guided practice was provided, more guided practice was needed but could not be given because of time limitations.

F. Effectiveness

18. Respondents reported that staff development concerning RSDS was of above-average effectiveness for the AEA special education staff. Respondents were asked to report the effectiveness of the staff development concerning RSDS on a 6-point scale (with 1 being "highly effective," 3 being "average effectiveness," and 6 being "highly ineffective"). The average of the respondents' answers was 2.7, suggesting that RSDS staff development for AEA special education staff members was perceived to be of above-average effectiveness.
19. Respondents indicated that follow-up, guided practice, and basing staff development activities on staff needs were important elements of successful RSDS staff development activities for the AEA special education staff. Eleven respondents reported that follow-up and guided practice were important elements in effective staff development. Eight believed that basing the staff development agenda on the participants' needs was an important element of effective staff development activities concerning RSDS for AEA special education staff members.
20. Respondents reported that staff development concerning RSDS was of above-average effectiveness for LEA staff members. Respondents were asked to report the effectiveness of the staff development concerning RSDS on a 6-point scale (with 1 being "highly effective," 3 being "average effectiveness," and 6 being "highly ineffective"). The average of the respondents' answers was 3.0, suggesting that staff development concerning RSDS for LEA staff members was perceived to be of above-average effectiveness.
21. Respondents indicated that follow-up, guided practice, and providing job-related staff development activities were important elements of successful staff development activities concerning RSDS for LEA staff members. Fifteen respondents reported that follow-up was an important element in effective staff development. Nine reported that guided practice was an important element, and seven viewed basing the inservice agenda on the participants' job-related needs as an important element of effective staff development activities concerning RSDS for LEA staff members.
22. Respondents indicated that the coordination of resources among regional AEAs increased the effectiveness of staff development activities concerning RSDS. Four of the respondents reported that the joint planning and implementation of staff development activities among members of the Northwest Consortium of AEAs (AEAs 3, 4, 5 and 12) increased the effectiveness of their staff development program.

23. A minority of respondents reported that a procedure or a strategy was in place to evaluate the effectiveness of staff development activities concerning RSDS for individual AEA special education staff members. Eleven respondents said that a procedure was in place to evaluate the effectiveness of staff development with individual AEA staff members. Only two indicated that a process to evaluate staff development was in place for individual school buildings, school districts, or an AEA as a whole.
24. A majority of the respondents reported that a procedure or strategy to evaluate the effectiveness of staff development activities concerning RSDS for LEA staff members was *not* in place. Fifteen respondents indicated that no procedure was in place to evaluate the effectiveness of staff development with LEA staff members, individual school buildings, school districts, or the AEA as a whole.
25. All respondents indicated a need for further staff development concerning RSDS in their AEAs. Nine respondents indicated that further staff development should be based on staff needs. Eight stated that further staff development was needed in the area of behavioral interventions, and five said that further staff development was needed in the areas of progress monitoring and functional assessment.

G. Outcomes

26. Respondents identified these possible outcomes of effective staff development activities concerning RSDS for AEA special education staff members: developing new skills for the participants; improving collaboration among special education teachers, general education teachers, and AEA support staff members; improving staff attitudes; and improving student outcomes. Fifteen respondents indicated that effective staff development allowed participants to learn new skills. Seven respondents reported that collaboration among educators increased and staff attitudes improved when effective staff development was in place. Five respondents said student outcomes improved when staff development activities were effective for AEA special education staff members.
27. Respondents identified these possible outcomes of effective staff development activities concerning RSDS for LEA staff members: developing new skills for the participants; improving collaboration among special education teachers, general education teachers, and AEA support staff members; improving staff attitudes; and increasing the use of data in making educational decisions. Eleven respondents reported that collaboration among educators increased when effective staff development was in place. Nine reported that effective staff development allowed participants to learn new skills. Eight respondents indicated that staff attitudes improved, and five said that LEA staff members made more data-based decisions when staff development activities were effective.

H. Barriers

28. Insufficient time to plan, implement and provide follow-up on staff development activities concerning RSDS was reported as a barrier to the implementation of effective staff development activities concerning RSDS. All 26 respondents reported that finding common planning time to work on staff development was extremely difficult. All respondents also indicated that time to provide guided practice and follow-up and to evaluate the effectiveness of the staff development was extremely limited. Respondents' comments indicated that AEA and LEA administrative support is needed in the scheduling of consistent and common planning time for staff development. Fifteen of the respondents indicated that staff development concerning RSDS needed to be seen as a higher priority by the AEA and the LEA administrative staff.

29. **A lack of funds for staff development activities concerning RSDS was reported as a barrier to the implementation of effective staff development activities concerning RSDS.** Nine respondents indicated that finding funds for staff development was extremely difficult and limited the scope and effectiveness of the staff development activities. AEA and LEA administrative support in the increased funding of staff development activities was seen as necessary. It should be noted that two additional respondents made unsolicited comments that funding was not a barrier to staff development activities concerning RSDS; they said that sufficient funding and resources were available to implement efficient staff development activities.
30. **Staff attitudes toward staff development activities concerning RSDS were reported as a barrier to the implementation of effective staff development activities concerning RSDS.** Nine respondents indicated that poor staff attitudes toward staff development concerning RSDS constituted a barrier to effective staff development. Seven of these nine commented that staff members' attitudes toward any staff development activity were negative, and that these negative attitudes also affected staff development concerning RSDS. Involving more LEA staff members in the planning and implementation of staff development activities was seen as important in changing staff attitudes. Basing the agenda of staff development activities on the job-related needs of participants was also seen as a way to improve staff attitudes. Seven respondents indicated that staff development concerning RSDS should be given a higher priority by the AEA and the LEA administrative staff.
31. **The lack of staff needs assessment relating to staff development activities concerning RSDS was reported as a barrier to the implementation of effective staff development activities concerning RSDS.** Seven respondents viewed the lack of staff input concerning the agenda for staff development as a barrier to effective staff development. Involving more LEA staff members and administrators in the planning and implementation of staff development activities was seen as important in improving staff development concerning RSDS. Seven respondents also commented that basing the agenda of the staff development activities on the job-related needs of the participants was seen as a way to improve the quality of staff development activities.

I. Future Actions

Effective staff development concerning RSDS is defined as leading to positive outcomes for students, teachers, and AEA staff members. Survey participants reported that general education teachers, special education teachers, and AEA support staff members can develop new skills that improve staff attitudes and collaboration among educators. Respondents indicated that when effective staff development is in place, educators are improving their ability to make data-based educational decisions. Respondents also indicated that student outcomes improved when there had been effective staff development for AEA and LEA staff members concerning RSDS. The positive outcomes reported in the survey should encourage AEAs and LEAs to continue to plan and implement effective staff development activities concerning RSDS.

Some of the barriers to the implementation of effective staff development interventions should be addressed by these future actions during the 1992-1993 school year:

1. A higher priority should be placed on staff development activities concerning RSDS. Additional time is needed for planning, implementing and evaluating staff development activities, as well as for their presentation and the provision of guided practice and other follow-up activities. Staff schedules should include adequate time to plan and implement staff development activities.

Surveys of staff needs should be used to plan and implement staff development activities for AEA and LEA staff members. A study of the job schedules and responsibilities of AEA support staff members and LEA staff members should be completed by the AEAs and LEAs; information from these studies should be reviewed by a team of LEA and AEA administrators, and an agenda for staff

development activities should be completed. Data from these studies should also be used to restructure staff assignments and duties to increase the opportunities for staff development.

2. Funding for the planning, implementation, and evaluation of staff development activities should be studied. Respondents reported mixed opinions regarding the adequacy of funding for staff development activities concerning RSDS. The Bureau of Special Education and the AEAs should form a committee to consider staff development needs pertaining to RSDS for Iowa educators. Information concerning the use of resources and funding in effective staff development activities concerning RSDS should be collected and then disseminated to all AEAs.
3. Best practices for staff development should be researched and information disseminated to Iowa's educators. Literature on staff development in business and education should be studied and summarized by a task force of Bureau, AEA, and LEA staff members. Information on successful staff development activities for educators should also be collected and summarized by the task force. The importance of staff involvement in the planning of staff development activities, and the importance of follow-up activities and guided practice following the staff development activity, should be discussed. The summary of best practices and theories of staff development should be presented in a task force report and disseminated to AEAs and LEAs.
4. Staff needs should be surveyed and used to plan staff development activities. Respondents strongly indicated that the effectiveness of staff development activities increased when the activities were directly related to the participants' job needs and responsibilities. For example, respondents indicated that staff development is needed in assessing students' behavioral needs and developing interventions within the general education classroom. The Bureau, LEAs and AEAs should therefore study effective behavioral intervention inservice programs. Staff development activities pertaining to the effective elements of these programs should be planned, implemented and evaluated.
5. Networking among AEAs regarding staff development activities concerning RSDS should be increased. Regional conferences and meetings should be scheduled to share innovative staff development activities, coordinate resources, and plan collaborative staff development programs. The coordinated staff development activities of AEAs 3, 4, 5, and 12 should be studied as a possible model for regional staff development.
6. Resources of both the Special Education and the Educational Services Divisions of the AEAs should be used in the planning and implementation of staff development activities concerning RSDS. Efforts should be made to include staff members from both divisions on planning committees for staff development activities. Information on innovative programs that use the combined resources of these two divisions to plan and implement staff development activities should be collected by the Bureau staff and shared with the AEAs.

***Summary:
State of the Art Survey***

Transition

**Renewed Service Delivery System (RSDS)
*Research Report #20***

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Pat Sitlington, Consultant, Bureau of Special Education
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Sandy Schmitz, Consultant, Bureau of Special Education**

Iowa Department of Education

June, 1992

Acknowledgments

Appreciation is expressed to the Area Education Agency (AEA) Directors of Special Education, who identified AEA staff members and local education agency personnel to be interviewed for this study. Appreciation is also extended to all the professionals identified below, who shared their time, expertise, and insights concerning all stages of transition.

Area Education Agency Personnel Interviews

Janice SyWassink	Keystone Area Education Agency 1
Don Dare	Lakeland Area Education Agency 3
Diane Twait Nelson	Lakeland Area Education Agency 3
Larry Biehl	Area Education Agency 4
Bev Fisher	Arrowhead Area Education Agency 5
Mary Stevens	Area Education Agency 6
Dennis Sinclair	Area Education Agency 7
Frank Darrah	Area Education Agency 7
Sue Gronewold	Area Education Agency 7
Jane Rock	Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency 9
Lucy Choisser	Grant Wood Area Education Agency 10
Paul Kiburz	Grant Wood Area Education Agency 10
Dick Tucker	Heartland Area Education Agency 11
Joe Lux	Western Hills Area Education Agency 12
Julie Curry	Loess Hills Area Education Agency 13
Karen Spahn	Loess Hills Area Education Agency 13
Deb Taylor	Loess Hills Area Education Agency 13
Al Hodgeman	Southern Prairie Area Education Agency 15
Charlotte Gibson	Great River Area Education Agency 16
Norma Whitaker	Great River Area Education Agency 16

Area Education Agency Personnel Interviews

Paul Giehl	Special education teacher, Mount Pleasant High School
Lynn Hodgeman	Special education teacher, North Mahaska High School
Lisa Schwartz	Special education teacher, Wilson Junior High School, Council Bluffs

We hope that this report proves helpful to Iowa educators as we expand our understanding of how to effectively plan for and implement transition throughout all stages of the individual's educational experiences.

P.O., P.S., P.M., and S.S.

Summary: State of the Art Survey Transition

The Renewed Service Delivery System (RSDS) initiative includes an improvement area related to the concept of transition that is stated as follows:

Transition. Students will benefit from transition efforts that coordinate communication and services provided by personnel at various levels throughout students' educational and post-educational careers.

Transition occurs at several stages in the education and life of all individuals. The focus of this study is on the longitudinal transition from one stage of the individual's educational experience to another. Transition-planning efforts have been occurring throughout the state for a number of years; thus many of the efforts reported in this summary began before the implementation of the tenets of RSDS. It is critical, however, that transition planning be a component of the Renewed Service Delivery System. The stages of transition covered in the interviews reported in this survey were: (a) hospital to home intervention; (b) home intervention to early childhood; (c) early childhood to elementary school; (d) elementary to middle school or junior high; (e) middle school or junior high to senior high; and (f) school to adult life.

This "State of the Art" study represents an effort to gain an increased understanding of the nature and extent of educational transition planning across the state. Data were gathered from area education agency (AEA) and local education agency (LEA) respondents via structured telephone interviews. This report summarizes information obtained from interviews with 18 AEA personnel representing 13 AEAs, and five LEA representatives. Respondents, identified by AEA Directors of Special Education, were selected because of their experience with the concept of transition planning. Respondents were sent a copy of the interview questions in advance to prepare for the telephone interviews. In some cases, respondents consulted professionals working in other stages of educational transition planning, for input on specific stages. Several respondents were interviewed in groups, and some AEA respondents were designated by their Director as "LEA" respondents, reporting the school district perspective.

Information in this report is organized into six sections: (a) Models for transition planning, (b) Participants in the planning process for the individual, (c) Operational considerations, (d) Effectiveness, (e) Best practices, and (f) Proposed future actions. Statements in bold type are conclusions drawn from the information gathered.

A. Models for Transition Planning

1. The majority of respondents felt that transition planning should occur at all the transition stages in an individual's educational and post-educational experience. Eighty-three percent of the respondents felt that transition planning should occur at all stages. Two felt that planning from elementary school to junior high and junior high to senior high is not needed.
2. The term "transition" is explicitly defined in the majority of the AEAs' written materials. Sixty-nine percent of the AEAs indicated that transition is defined in at least one AEA document, although this is often associated with transition from school to adult life or within early childhood.

3. **Written procedures for transition planning exist primarily at two levels: school to adult life and early childhood.** Personnel from 12 of the 13 AEAs represented stated that they have written procedures for planning transition from school to adult life. Six AEAs have procedures for from hospital to home intervention, eight for from home intervention to early childhood, and six for from early childhood to elementary. Only one AEA has written procedures for planning transition from elementary school to middle/junior high and 2 have procedures for from middle school or junior high to senior high.
4. **Transition-planning services are consistently integrated into RSDS building plans in about half of the AEAs represented.** Responses indicated that three of the thirteen AEAs whose personnel were interviewed are just beginning the building plan process. Of the remaining AEAs, five stated that transition-planning services are integrated into building plans at these levels: early childhood to elementary, elementary to middle/junior high, middle/junior high to high school, and school to adult life. Three AEAs are integrating transition planning services for the hospital to home intervention and home intervention to early childhood stages into building plans.
5. **There is a wide variance in the methods used to train staff in transition planning, both across AEAs and across stages of transition.** The most systematic training appears to be occurring at the home intervention to early childhood and school to adult life stages. At the beginning and ending stages of transition planning, training methods include the following: procedures-manual based, "train the trainer" model, discipline-specific training, and one-to-one training using actual case examples. Training is delivered through AEA-wide inservices, regional workshops, or small group meetings. Training related to transition from elementary to middle/junior high and from middle/junior high to high school is much less systematic. Training of new staff is usually accomplished through a staff orientation inservice for each discipline or for new staff members only; at least one AEA uses a mentoring system. Several AEAs indicated that training in transition planning will now be linked to training in Individualized Education Program (IEP) procedures.

B. Participants in the Planning Process for the Individual

6. **The lead person in transition planning is typically the special education teacher or consultant.** At the school to adult life stage, the lead person may also be the work experience coordinator or transition specialist. Other individuals mentioned included social workers, parents, general education teachers, and psychologists.
7. **Student involvement in transition planning varies greatly across AEAs and across levels.** At the elementary to middle/junior high transition stage, students are either not involved or are involved only in terms of visiting the middle or junior high school or discussing options with the teacher. At the middle/junior high school to senior high level, four AEAs indicated that students do have input into the planning process; another four indicated that students visit the senior high and discuss classes with the teacher. At the school to adult life stage, student involvement ranges from completing interest inventories to participating "as much as possible." Two AEAs indicated that students have a major responsibility to follow up on options suggested; one AEA indicated that the student often takes the lead in the planning process. The majority of individuals indicated that they are working toward greater student involvement in the process at all levels.
8. **All AEAs indicated that parents are involved as part of the team in all stages of transition planning.** A number of individuals indicated that parents are also asked to fill out planning sheets before the meetings. Parent involvement appears to be stressed most at the beginning and ending stages of transition planning, through Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) meetings and transition planning from school to adult life.

C. Operational Considerations

9. **In all AEAs, transition planning typically occurs as part of the IFSP or IEP process.** Because of this, recordkeeping is usually tied into the IEP or IFSP document, and transition planning information is transferred either with the cumulative file or transferred from teacher to teacher.

D. Effectiveness

10. **Respondents consistently listed a number of benefits from transition planning across all levels.**
- Increased ownership of the IEP process on the part of the parents and student
 - Focus on the student's needs—not on available programs
 - Placement of individual in less restrictive programs and adult environments
 - Minimal interruption in the learning process
 - Better understanding of future options on the part of staff, parents, and student
 - Better communication among all parties involved
 - Placement of more students in post-secondary programs
 - Students' taking classes more closely tied to their career interests
 - Students' leaving school with more specific skills
 - More timely availability of adaptive equipment
11. **The effectiveness of transition planning at each level was rated by respondents.** Ratings were not recorded if transition planning was not in effect at a specific level. (Note: Since some individuals were interviewed in groups, there were 19 responses to this item. An "NA" response was used to indicate that transition planning was not occurring at this level or that the respondent did not know enough about planning at this level to provide an accurate rating of effectiveness.)

A 5-point rating scale was used, with 5 representing "highly effective," and 1 representing "highly ineffective."

a. Hospital to home intervention	Avg. 4.0	NA(n=9)
b. Home intervention to early childhood	Avg. 4.07	NA(n=5)
c. Early childhood to elementary	Avg. 3.69	NA(n=6)
d. Elementary to middle school or junior high	Avg. 2.55	NA(n=10)
e. Middle school or junior high to senior high	Avg. 3.36	NA(n=8)
f. School to adult life	Avg. 3.75	NA(n=3)

12. **Respondents offered the following observations regarding barriers to effective implementation of transition and solutions that can address these barriers.**

Barrier	Proposed Solution
Lack of time for effective planning between levels	Encouragement by administrators to include time for transition planning in staff schedules

Barrier	Proposed Solution
Lack of knowledge of transition process and programs at other levels	Staff development and public relations
Limited service options at each level	Expanded service options
Lack of ownership of transition process by current or future environment	Staff development on importance and effectiveness of transition planning; administrative support for transition

13. Respondents identified several effective activities related to transition planning.

- Families and the student visiting the next learning environment to which the student's transition will be made
- Joint planning among staff from the previous and future learning environments
- Inventories completed by the family and student related to desired outcomes in the future learning environment
- Observing "successful" individuals in the future learning environment
- Workshops for families and teachers
- Pen pals and "buddies" from the future learning environment
- Parent newsletter
- Checklists for families indicating activities useful in preparing the individual for the future environment
- Family night—as part of general education activities
- Transition fairs and resource directories (for the transition from school to adult life)

E. Best Practices

The following procedures are recommended as best practice related to transition in all stages of the student's educational and post-educational experience.

1. **Transition-related activities for individuals with disabilities should be included as part of those regular activities occurring within the general education program.** Transition should be more than a tour of the building; it should be expanded to include systematic planning with the family, student, and the staff members involved with the student in both the current and future environments. The outcome of this planning should be modification of the instructional and/or support program for the student in both the current and future environments.
2. **Transition planning should occur at *all* levels of the individual's educational and post-educational experiences.** This would include but not be limited to: (a) hospital to home intervention, (b) home intervention to early childhood, (c) early childhood to elementary, (d) elementary to middle school/junior high, (e) middle school/junior high to senior high, and (f) school to adult life.
3. The student (except in early childhood) and family must be integrally involved in the transition-planning process. Other agencies identified by the IEP team should also be involved as early as possible.

4. **Transition planning services should be included as a component of all RSDS building plans, with emphasis on new/innovative systems to improve or revise transition activities and services.**

F. Proposed Future Activities

1. Review programs in several different schools to determine how transition planning is incorporated into the overall general education program and activities.
2. Conduct staff development activities and monitor the IEP/IFSP process to ensure that student needs (as identified in planning for transition to the projected future environment) are identified prior to the development of the IFSP/IEP for the student, and that needed modifications to the present and/or future environment are integrated into the IEP or IFSP.
3. Develop and implement a process for evaluating the effectiveness of the transition process in terms of consumer satisfaction and student outcomes.
4. Infuse the concept of transition planning into compliance and technical assistance activities with local education agencies.

