

A Technical Report on Special Education in the Catholic Diocese of Evansville[[1]](#footnote-1)

February 2017

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**Introduction**

Mission Statement: *Marian Educational Outreach is a ministry of the Catholic Diocese of* *Evansville committed to providing opportunities for students with unique learning needs to reach their highest potential while remaining in the Catholic school system.* This mission statement was adopted in 2006 when the organization restructured it focus to support special education initiates for the increasing diverse student population in the 28 Diocesan schools. In order to support this mission and to be consistent to the organization’s new focus, MEO conducted the 2016 survey of school administrators requesting information regarding their current services and demands in educating students with special needs enrolled in their schools. This is a follow up to previous surveys conducted by MEO in 2005 and 2012.

The purpose of the survey is to understand demand for special education services in the catholic schools and inform planning and response to serve these students by Marian Educational Outreach and the Schools Office of the Catholic Diocese of Evansville.

Currently there are 7360 students enrolled in 26 schools in the Evansville Catholic Diocese. In 25 of these schools, 808 students have been identified with unique learning needs. The Diocese Catholic Schools Office and Marian Educational Outreach enjoy a shared belief to provide a Catholic school education to these students who learn differently. The following Statement of Relationship is included in the MEO Bylaws: “While the Diocese of Evansville and Marian Educational Outreach are separately incorporated, they share a mutual interest in the betterment of providing a Catholic school education to students with unique learning needs. The Diocese of Evansville recognizes MEO as a valued partner who provides funding, programming, and resources to Catholic schools that promote the mission and vision of MEO. The relationship is one of open communication and appreciation to ensure that all children who desire a Catholic school education may indeed receive this gift. “

**Method**

The data contained in this report comes from online survey conducted by Marian Educational Outreach in conjunction with the Schools Office of the Catholic Diocese of Evansville. A seventeen question online survey was introduced at the October 2016 School Administrators Meeting. School administrators were given approximately 20 minutes to complete the survey and were then given a link to access the survey for completion upon returning to their schools. Schools that did not complete the survey were contacted for follow up. Of the 26 schools in the diocese, 23 responded to the survey in its entirety 2. The data in this report is based on those 23 schools.

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2 Two of the three schools that did not respond to the survey in its entirely did submit answers to the questions on service demands. Those results are included in table 4.

**Results**

Staffing

 The diocesan schools have made a significant investment in staffing to support special education. Currently there are 45 individuals employed by the diocese to provide special education services. Compared to 2005 (16 staff), there has been almost a 300% increase in staffing. Likewise, we have seen an almost 50% increase since the 2012 survey (32 staff). Consequently, there has been a sustained and robust effort to meet the needs of these students. While the distribution of these educational staff is not equal across schools, schools have on average 1.34 dedicated staff. As can be seen in table 1, the vast majority of these staff are certified in special education.

Talking Points

* Over 45 individuals are employed within diocesan Catholic schools providing special education services
* On average, each school has at least one full time equivalent staff dedicated to providing special education services
* Two-thirds of special education services are provided by certified teachers

**Table 1: Diocesan Staffing of Special Education**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|   | Number Serving Diocese | Average Per School |
| Part-time Certified Teachers | 11 | 0.48 |
| Part-time Uncertified Teachers | 5 | 0.2 |
| Full-time Certified Teachers | 17 | 0.72 |
| Full-time Uncertified Teachers | 3 | 0.12 |
| Part-time Paraprofessionals | 7 | 0.28 |
| Full Time Paraprofessionals | 1 | 0.04 |
| Total Diocesan Staffing | 45 | Avg. FTE 1.34 |

Alternative Services

 It is difficult to get a detailed account of how many families are choosing to send their students with special needs to schools outside of their parish school. However, the judgement of principals is that approximately 45 student are not appropriately served by their parish school with a significant majority of these (28) choosing to attend public schools (Table 2). Six of the 45 students are served at the Holy Spirit campus of Annunciation parish suggesting that either 1) west side students are sufficiently served within their schools or 2) are underserved but do not see Annunciation as a viable option.

Talking Points

* Special education programs at the Holy Spirit Campus of Annunciation Parish overwhelmingly serve students in parishes on Evansville’s east side, with only one exception from Westside Catholic School,
* Twenty-eight students are enrolled in public school who would otherwise attend a parish school were it not for demand for special services.
* Home school and alternative schools lag behind pubic school as the preferred option for families who require special needs services outside of Annunciation Parish,

Within School Services

In 2005 and 2012, 286 and 432 Catholic school students received services respectively. In 2005, an overwhelming number of these students (272) received services from the public schools with over 2/3 of these students receiving assistance with a speech and language impairment. Since that time the number of students with diagnoses that make them eligible for special services has skyrocketed. Today 808 students with 937 diagnoses are served by the Catholic schools (Table 3). A significant number (326) of these students are diagnosed with speech and language impairments; however, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder and specific learning disabilities are not far behind (Table 4).

Talking Points

* Over 800 students receive school provided services for special education in the Diocese.
* Over 100 students receive services for more than one diagnoses
* Students receiving special services receive on average 30 minutes of special instruction per day
* The most common diagnoses for special services are specific learning disabilities, speech language impairment, and attention deficit hyperactive disorder
* 243 students with special needs receive after school support.

**Table 2: Students Receiving Alternative Arrangements for Services**

|  |
| --- |
| Number of Parish Students Receiving Alternative Arrangements for Services |
| School Name:  | Annunciation School at Holy Spirit Campus | Public School | Home School | Alternative School |
| Annunciation Catholic School at Holy Spirit  | NA | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Annunciation Catholic School at Christ the King | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Corpus Christi School | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| Good Shepherd School | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Holy Cross School | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Holy Redeemer School | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Holy Rosary School | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Holy Trinity School | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mater Dei High School | NA | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Reitz Memorial High School | NA | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Resurrection School | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| St. Wendel School | 0 | NR | NR | NR |
| St. Bernard School | 0 | NR | NR | NR |
| St. James School | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| St. John the Baptist School | 1 | 5 | NR | NR |
| St. Joseph - Princeton | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| St. Joseph School -Vand. Co. | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Sts. Peter and Paul School | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Vincennes Flaget | NR | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Vincennes Rivet | NA | NR | NR | NR |
| Washington Catholic Elementary School | 0 | NR | 0 | NR |
| Washington Catholic Middle/High School | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Westside Catholic | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Sum | 6 | 28 | 6 | 5 |
| Avg./School | 0.33 | 1.47 | 0.32 | 0.28 |

**Table 3: Number of Students Receiving Supplemental Support**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| School Name:  | Total Number | Average Per School |
| School Provided After School Support | 108 Students | 5.142857143 |
| Parent Funded After School Support | 135 Students | 6.428571429 |
| Number of Students Served | 808 Students | 35.13043478 |
| School Provided Support - Daily Minutes  | 651 | 28.30434783 Per Student Receiving Services |

**Table 4: Students Eligible for Support by Diagnoses (in 25 schools)[[2]](#footnote-2)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Diagnosis | Number |
| MCD: Mild Cognitive Disability | 25 |
| SLD: Specific Learning Disability | 169 |
| SLI: Speech Language Impairment | 326 |
| DHH: Deaf or Hard of Hearing | 10 |
| OI: Orthopedic Impairment | 2 |
| OHI: Other Health Impairment | 44 |
| ASD: Autism Spectrum Disorder | 24 |
| ADHD: Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder | 258 |
| Tourette Syndrome | 3 |
| LD: Learning Disability | 76 |
| Total | 937 |

School Provided Support

 Every school in the diocese provides some level of support for students with special learning needs (Table 5). In addition to partnering with the public schools for service delivery inside and outside of the school building, the most common forms of support are 1) resource classes to support students with coursework and accommodations for general education courses and 2) mainstreamed classes with some students receiving a modified curriculum. Moreover some schools are providing more advanced services such as self-contained classes or tutoring services to foster academic success.

Talking Points

* One hundred percent of schools in the diocese provide some degree of accommodations or special services for students with unique needs
* The most common form of accommodation are resource classes to provide students with supplemental support for their general education curriculum
* Public schools are active in supplementing Catholic school provided services in 18 of the 23 responding schools

**Table 5: School Provided Accommodations**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Accommodation | Number of Schools |
| Resource classes to support students with coursework and accommodations for general education courses | 18 |
| Mainstreamed classes with some students receiving a modified curriculum | 14 |
| Co-taught classes with general education and special education teachers collaborating | 5 |
| Self-contained classes with grade level curriculum and standards  | 11 |
| Self-contained classes with modified curriculum | 6 |
| After school study hall | 8 |
| Tutoring services | 12 |
| Public School services provided within your school building | 16 |
| Public school services provided outside of your school building | 3 |

School Special Education Priorities

 While tremendous progress has been made in serving students with special needs, it is clear that further support is desired. Table 6 and Graph 1 outline the areas of support most desired by principals. After school tutoring, teacher pedagogical training and support for assistive technology dominate the list. However, these results mask the tremendous diversity that exists within the diocese (tables 7-10). The high schools, west side schools and schools outside of the city of Evansville have unique needs that cannot be met by a blanket approach. Graph 2 compares these needs. While some issues such as a desire for tutoring programs and pedagogical training transcend schools, there are high priority programs that are only found within some subset of the schools.

Talking Points

* After school tutoring is the most sought after service for schools to supplement their special education programs
* This is followed by pedagogical/assistive technology training (training for teachers), funding for assistive technology (software and devices) and a teacher resource center
* Priorities vary based on geography with a dedicated special education campus being the top priority for west side schools and the expansion of services outside of Evansville as the third priority for schools outside of Evansville.

**Table 6: School Identified Special Education Priorities**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Ranking | Priority | Importance Score | % Very Important or Important |
| 1 | After School Tutoring | 84 | 37% |
| 2 | Teacher Pedagogical Training | 82 | 36% |
| 3 | Financial Support for Assistive Technology | 81 | 35% |
| 4 | Faculty Training in Assistive Technology | 80 | 35% |
| 5 | Teacher Resource Center | 76 | 33% |
| 6 | Special Needs Education Data Resource Center for Diocese of Evansville | 76 | 33% |
| 7 | Principal Meetings to Address Special Education Services | 70 | 32% |
| 8 | Parent Support Program (Parent to Parent) | 68 | 30% |
| 9 | Expansion of MEO Supported Programs Outside the City of Evansville | 67 | 29% |
| 10 | Parent Resource Center (Professional System Navigation Services) | 61 | 28% |
| 11 | Increased Support for Special Education Students in Extra-curricular Activities | 60 | 26% |
| 12 | Community Building Programs (Big/Little Programs among Special Education Students or Programs that Match Special and Non-Special Education Students) | 57 | 25% |
| 13 | Special Education Campus on West Side of Evansville  | 56 | 27% |
| 14 | Job Training Store for Students in the High School Life Skills Program | 55 | 24% |
| 15 | Job Fair for Special Education Students | 53 | 23% |
| 16 | Post High School Transition Program for Special Education Students | 50 | 22% |

**Graph 1: Top Six Special Education Priorities**

**Table 7: School Identified Special Education Priorities West Side Schools**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Ranking | Priority | Importance Score | % Very Important or Important |
| **1** | **Special Education Campus on West Side of Evansville**  | **33** | **75%** |
| 2 | Financial Support for Assistive Technology | 32 | 75% |
| 3 | Faculty Training in Assistive Technology | 32 | 75% |
| 4 | Teacher Pedagogical Training | 28 | 63% |
| 5 | After School Tutoring | 27 | 50% |
| 6 | Teacher Resource Center | 27 | 50% |
| 7 | Parent Resource Center (Professional System Navigation Services) | 23 | 25% |
| 8 | Special Needs Education Data Resource Center for Diocese of Evansville | 23 | 13% |
| 9 | Principal Meetings to Address Special Education Services | 23 | 38% |
| 10 | Parent Support Program (Parent to Parent) | 22 | 25% |
| 11 | Job Training Store for Students in the High School Life Skills Program | 20 | 38% |
| 12 | Increased Support for Special Education Students in Extra-curricular Activities | 19 | 25% |
| 13 | Expansion of MEO Supported Programs Outside the City of Evansville | 19 | 25% |
| 14 | Post High School Transition Program for Special Education Students | 18 | 13% |
| 15 | Job Fair for Special Education Students | 18 | 13% |
| 16 | Community Building Programs (Big/Little Programs Among Special Education Students or Programs that Match Special and Non-Special Education Students) | 14 | 0% |

**Table 8: School Identified Special Education Priorities Outside of Evansville Schools**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Ranking | Priority | Importance Score | % Very Important or Important |
| 1 | After School Tutoring | 41 | 73% |
| 2 | Special Needs Education Data Resource Center for Diocese of Evansville | 39 | 45% |
| **3** | **Expansion of MEO Supported Programs Outside the City of Evansville** | **38** | **55%** |
| 4 | Teacher Resource Center | 36 | 55% |
| 5 | Principal Meetings to Address Special Education Services | 35 | 27% |
| 6 | Financial Support for Assistive Technology | 34 | 36% |
| 7 | Faculty Training in Assistive Technology | 34 | 36% |
| 8 | Teacher Pedagogical Training | 34 | 36% |
| 9 | Parent Support Program (Parent to Parent) | 29 | 27% |
| 10 | Community Building Programs (Big/Little Programs Among Special Education Students or Programs that Match Special and Non-Special Education Students) | 28 | 18% |
| 11 | Increased Support for Special Education Students in Extra-curricular Activities | 28 | 18% |
| 12 | Parent Resource Center (Professional System Navigation Services) | 28 | 18% |
| 13 | Job Training Store for Students in the High School Life Skills Program | 24 | 18% |
| 14 | Job Fair for Special Education Students | 23 | 9% |
| 15 | Post High School Transition Program for Special Education Students | 21 | 9% |
| 16 | Special Education Campus on West Side of Evansville  | 21 | 18% |

**Table 9: High School Identified Special Education Priorities**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Ranking | Priority | Importance Score | % Very Important or Important |
| 1 | After School Tutoring | 16 | 75% |
| 2 | Parent Support Program (Parent to Parent) | 14 | 75% |
| 3 | Job Training Store for Students in the High School Life Skills Program | 14 | 75% |
| 4 | Community Building Programs (Big/Little Programs Among Special Education Students or Programs that Match Special and Non-Special Education Students) | 13 | 50% |
| 5 | Job Fair for Special Education Students | 13 | 50% |
| 6 | Special Needs Education Data Resource Center for Diocese of Evansville | 13 | 50% |
| 7 | Increased Support for Special Education Students in Extra-curricular Activities | 12 | 25% |
| 8 | Expansion of MEO Supported Programs Outside the City of Evansville | 12 | 25% |
| 9 | Post High School Transition Program for Special Education Students | 12 | 50% |
| 10 | Financial Support for Assistive Technology | 11 | 25% |
| 11 | Teacher Pedagogical Training | 11 | 25% |
| 12 | Faculty Training in Assistive Technology | 10 | 25% |
| 13 | Parent Resource Center (Professional System Navigation Services) | 9 | 50% |
| 14 | Teacher Resource Center | 9 | 25% |
| 15 | Principal Meetings to Address Special Education Services | 7 | 0% |
| 16 | Special Education Campus on West Side of Evansville  | 5 | 0% |

**Table 10: School Identified Special Education Priorities East Side Schools**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Ranking | Priority | Importance Score | % Very Important or Important |
| 1 | Teacher Pedagogical Training | 25 | 83% |
| 2 | After School Tutoring | 23 | 50% |
| 3 | Financial Support for Assistive Technology | 21 | 33% |
| 4 | Faculty Training in Assistive Technology | 21 | 50% |
| 5 | Parent Support Program (Parent to Parent) | 21 | 50% |
| 6 | Teacher Resource Center | 20 | 50% |
| 7 | Special Needs Education Data Resource Center for Diocese of Evansville | 19 | 33% |
| 8 | Community Building Programs (Big/Little Programs Among Special Education Students or Programs that Match Special and Non-Special Education Students) | 18 | 33% |
| 9 | Increased Support for Special Education Students in Extra-curricular Activities | 17 | 17% |
| 10 | Principal Meetings to Address Special Education Services | 17 | 50% |
| 11 | Job Fair for Special Education Students | 16 | 17% |
| 12 | Expansion of MEO Supported Programs Outside the City of Evansville | 15 | 33% |
| 13 | Post High School Transition Program for Special Education Students | 15 | 17% |
| 14 | Parent Resource Center (Professional System Navigation Services) | 15 | 17% |
| 15 | Job Training Store for Students in the High School Life Skills Program | 14 | 17% |
| 16 | Special Education Campus on West Side of Evansville  | 8 | 0% |

Graph 2: Summary of School Specific Requests

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Overall | East Side | West Side | Outside City | High School |
| After School Tutoring | Teacher Pedagogical Training | Special Education Campus on West Side of Evansville  | After School Tutoring | After School Tutoring |
| Teacher Pedagogical Training | After School Tutoring | Financial Support for Assistive Technology | Special Needs Education Data Resource Center | Parent Support Program (Parent to Parent) |
| Financial Support for Assistive Technology | Financial Support for Assistive Technology | Faculty Training in Assistive Technology | Expansion Outside the City of Evansville | Job Training Store for Students in the Life Skills Program |
| Faculty Training in Assistive Technology | Faculty Training in Assistive Technology | Teacher Pedagogical Training | Teacher Resource Center | Community Building Programs  |
| Teacher Resource Center | Parent Support Program (Parent to Parent) | After School Tutoring | Principal Meetings to Address Special Education Services | Job Fair for Special Education Students |

1. Compiled by Bev Williamson, Executive Director of Marian Education Outreach and Trent A. Engbers, Assistant Professor Political Science and Public Administration at the University of Southern Indiana. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This table includes St. Benedict’s Cathedral and St. Phillips, but excludes Resurrection [↑](#footnote-ref-2)