

CHARTER SCHOOLS & STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: A GROWING NATIONAL POLICY ISSUE

CEC 2010 Convention
Nashville, Tennessee
April 23, 2010

Fred Weintraub
Independent Monitor
Modified Consent Decree
Los Angeles Unified School District

What do we know?

The LAUSD:

- 161 LAUSD authorized charter schools (CS), 19% of LAUSD schools
- 72,623 students in CS, 10.5% of all LAUSD students
- Students with disabilities (SWD) are 7.4% of CS students & 11.4% of LAUSD students
- Students with low incidence disabilities are 1.4% of start-up CS students & 3.6% of LAUSD students

What do we know? (continued)

- LAUSD does not require CS to have special education services comparable to LAUSD schools
- There are special class teachers in 8.1% of CS & 87% in LAUSD schools
- Of the 139 start-up CS only one has a special class teacher
- Enrollment at CS is by lottery. They cannot deny admission based on disability, CS claim that SWD don't apply. Parents say they don't apply because appropriate services are not available.
- CS receive State funding on an ADA basis that includes a factor for special education.

What do we know? (continued)

- CS have to use LAUSD special education policies and procedures and the IEP system
- CS are not currently required to use the LAUSD student information system
- There are higher rates of IDEA compliance problems in CS
- LAUSD has no line authority over CS other than to remove the charter
- CS must comply with ADA and State building accessibility requirements. Inspections done by local municipalities were found inadequate.

Essential Special Education Policies

- CS students are students of the authorizing agency and that agency has the authority to enforce federal, state and its own policies.
- CS must use the special education policies and procedures of the authorizing agencies.
- Each school under the authority of the authorizing agency must be part of the agency wide plan for serving SWD.

Essential Policies (continued)

- The authorizing process requires CS to specify how each would implement:
 - An aggressive recruitment program to encourage parents of SWD to apply
 - How it will provide and administer special education programs and services in sufficient detail to judge capacity.
- Each CS must have the appropriate program capacity to serve SWD before they open.
- CS must use the authorizing agencies special education data and management systems.
- No CS may be authorized unless it meets ADA building accessibility requirements.

Office of the Independent Monitor Studies and Reports

- Copies of research studies and reports can be found at:
<http://oimla.com>

Contact Information

Fred Weintraub Independent Monitor

Office of the Independent Monitor
333 South Beaudry Avenue
18th floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017
(213) 241-1797

fred.weintraub@lausd.net

Or

(310) 918-2118

fredweintraub@verizon.net