

Interim Report on the Connection Between the Identification of Minority and At-Risk Students as Students with Behavioral or Emotional Disabilities and the Gap in Student Achievement

Submitted to:

The Commission on Improving the Academic
Achievement of Minority and At-Risk Students
and

The Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee

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Interim Report to the Commission on Improving the Academic Achievement of Minority and At-Risk Students and The Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the Connection between the Identification of Minority and At-Risk Students as Students with Behavioral or Emotional Disabilities and the Gap in Student Achievement

State Board of Education. Department of Public Instruction
Office of Instructional and Accountability Services. January 2001

Interim Report

Study of the Connection between the Identification of Minority and At-Risk Students as Students with Behavioral or Emotional Disabilities and the Gap in Student Achievement

Section 8.28a of House Bill 1840, the 2000 Appropriations Bill requires the State Board of Education to study the connection between the identification of minority and at-risk students as students with behavioral or emotional disabilities and the gap in student achievement. The Department of Public Instruction collects information about student achievement, specific discipline policies and exceptional children. Excerpts of the tables referred to below are attached.

According to the Table 12, "Pupils in Membership by Race and Sex, 1999-2000 from Statistical Profile, Public Schools of North Carolina 2000, there were 777,400 (62%) white students and 476,301 (38%) minority students attending school in North Carolina for the 1999-2000 school year. *The December 1, 1999 Headcount of Children with Disabilities in Local Education Agencies, State Operated Programs and Charter Schools* reports 4684 (45%) white students with behavior or emotional disabilities and 5625 (55%) minority students with behavior or emotional disabilities. Table 4, "Report of Children with Disabilities Exiting Special Education during the 1999-2000 School Year in the 1999-2000 Exceptional Children Division End of Year Report" shows that 50% of the exceptional children who dropped out of school were minority and 50% were white. 3517 (61%) of the students who either exited special education services or completed high school with a certificate or diploma were white and 2263 (39%) were minorities.

Table 5 in the 1999-2000 Exceptional Children End of Year Report gives data about the number of children with disabilities who have been removed from school for drug and weapon offenses, long-term suspended or expelled, removed by a hearing officer and having multiple short-term suspensions summing more than 10 days. 398 students with behavioral or emotional disabilities had long term removals from school during 1999-2000. This was 26% of the total 1527 exceptional children removed during that year. 632 students with behavioral or emotional disabilities had short-term suspensions summing to greater than ten days during the same year. This was 27% of the total 2310 students with multiple short term suspensions. This data is also analyzed according to ethnicity for all exceptional children. 517 (32%) white students and 1119 (68%) minority students had long term removals during 1999-2000 and 851 (36%) white students and 1503 (64%) minority students had short-term suspensions summing to greater than ten days during that year.

A Report Card for the ABCs of Public Education Volume II 1999-2000 gives a summary of the percent of student scores at or above grade level for students with behavioral or emotional disabilities. For the reading test in grades 3 through 8 percents for these students range from a low of 29.6% in the 6th grade to a high of 42.9% in the 5th grade. This compares to a range of 69.5% in the 6th grade and 82.5% in the 8th grade for all students who took the reading test. For the mathematics test in grades 3 through 8 percents for students with behavioral or emotional disabilities range from a low of 26.5%

in the 8th grade to a high of 48.6% in the 5th grade. This compares to a range of 71.8% in the 3rd grade and 84.4% in the 4th grade for all students who took the mathematics test. The composite percent of scores at or above grade level for students with behavioral or emotional disabilities was 34.6% in comparison to 76% for all students taking the end-of-grade tests. The percent of scores at or above level III on the end-of-course tests for students with behavioral or emotional disabilities ranges from a low of 11.3% for English II to a high of 50% for Chemistry giving a composite of 20.1%. This compares to a low of 57.6% for Biology to a high of 72.9% in Physics giving a composite of 61.4% for all students.

The information available clearly indicates that students with behavioral and emotional disabilities are not performing as well as other students. The over representation of minorities in this area of exceptionality may contribute to the academic achievement gap. In order to answer the specific questions required by the legislature the Department of Public Instruction has contracted with the Center for Developmental Science (CDS) at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. The contract for the study was signed on Monday, November 20, 2000. The researchers began preliminary preparations in October and early November. Outside experts will review the criteria used to identify whether a student has a behavioral or emotional disability. The study involves reviewing records of students, observing classrooms, and requesting that school system personnel complete a simple survey.

As of December 22, 2000, CDS expects to have reviewed the files of over three hundred students from thirty school systems. When they are finished, they will have reviewed the files of over four hundred students from thirty-three to thirty-five school systems. By the second week of January, the researchers plan to have observed seven to eight classrooms and will eventually observe fifteen to twenty classrooms in nine to ten school systems. A meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 23, 2001 with experts who will review the identification criteria. Two of the experts have contributed nationally to the literature about the over representation of minorities in special education.

Excerpt from Table 12
Pupils in Membership by Race and Sex, 1999 – 2000
Statistical Profile, Public Schools of North Carolina

	Indian		Asian		Hispanic		Black		White		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Total
Total	9592	9170	11,788	10,809	23,790	22,374	196,347	192,431	399,333	378,067	1,253,701

Excerpt from Table 4
Report of Children with Disabilities Exiting
Special Education During the 1999-2000 School Year
The December, 1999 Headcount of Children with Disabilities in Local Education Agencies,
State Operated Programs and Charter Schools

Number of Students Ages 14-21 Exiting Special Education by Race/Ethnicity

Basis of Exit:	Indian	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Total
(A) No longer receives special education	30	14	460	23	845	1372
(B) Graduated with regular high school diploma	34	15	881	34	2024	2988
(C) Received a certificate	37	8	710	17	648	1420
(H) Dropped out	103	13	1414	53	1584	3167

Excerpt from Table 5, Sections A and B
Report of Children with Disabilities Exiting
Special Education During the 1999-2000 School Year
The December, 1999 Headcount of Children with Disabilities in Local Education Agencies,
State Operated Programs and Charter Schools

	Number of Children Subject to Multiple Short-Term Suspensions Summing to >10 Days	Unduplicated Count of Children Subject to Unilateral Removal for Drug or Weapon Offenses and/or Removal by Hearing Officer Determination Regarding Likely Injury and/or Long-Term Suspension/Expulsion
Emotional Disturbance	632	398
White, non-Hispanic	851	517
Black, non-Hispanic	1351	1047
Hispanic	33	23
Asian	48	17
Native American	71	32

Excerpt from *A Report Card for the ABCs of Public Education Volume II 1999-2000*
 End-of-Grade Subgroup Statistics by School System
 Percent of Scores At or Above Grade Level by Ethnicity, Gender and Disability

Writing	Reading						Mathematics						All		
	Comp	3	4	5	6	7	8	3	4	5	6	7		8	
All Students	74.4	72.1	79.1	69.5	76.4	82.5	71.8	84.4	82.9	81.0	80.7	80.6	57.6	71.9	76.0
Behaviorally-Emotionally Handicapped	38.2	33.0	42.9	29.6	33.7	36.4	37.3	48.6	41.4	35.7	35.1	26.5	25.0	24.1	34.6

Excerpt from *A Report Card for the ABCs of Public Education Volume II 1999-2000*
 End-of-Course Subgroup Statistics by School System
 Percent of Scores At or Above Level III by Ethnicity, Gender and Disability

Subject	Algebra I	Algebra II	Biology	Chemistry	English I	English II	ELPS	Geometry	Physical Science	Physics	U.S History	Composite
All Students	68.9	62.7	57.6	62.0	68.4	58.0	67.3	60.0	57.1	72.9	46.9	61.4
Behaviorally-Emotionally Handicapped	25.1	38.9	19.8	50.0	21.2	11.3	24.2	38.1	16.5	*	16.8	20.1