



NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS IN ILLINOIS: LEADERS IN SPECIALIZED EDUCATION

PRESENTATION BY:

ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF PRIVATE SPECIAL EDUCATION
CENTERS (IAPSEC)

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Nonpublic special education programs are an integral part of Illinois' sophisticated special education service delivery system.

As defined by ISBE, nonpublic special education programs provide educational, therapeutic and/or residential services to students with disabilities. In the continuum of services for eligible students, federal and state laws allow programmatic options for students who may require exceptional educational and/or clinical intervention to meet their needs. Typically, students placed in 14-7 .02 programs have such severe and perhaps complicated clinical and educational needs that school districts opt to refer their students to outside district placements after exploring other least restrictive options.

Approximately 500 programs have the following characteristics:

- Continue to be innovators in best practice
- Expand and contract based on urgent community needs
- Provide an array of clinical and educational services that cannot be provided by local public schools
- Provide services mandated in the development of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP). In the IEP, choices regarding which program best meets the needs of the children are made, including nonpublic school programs.
- Receive targeted funding provided by Section 14-7.02 of the Illinois School Code to ensure these services are available. This funding complies with Federal law because Illinois has the required policies and procedures to ensure that children are placed based on need without regard to funding.

It is essential in understanding the role of nonpublic special education programs, as part of the Illinois service delivery system, to provide information about the students who are served by these schools.

Many of these students have the following characteristics :

- Have been psychiatrically hospitalized.
- Live in residential treatment centers or group homes.
- Were not attending school at all
- Had been removed from public school for the safety of other children
- Have emotional and behavior-disorders so severe that they need clinical programs in order to educate them properly and to keep non-involved children safe.
- Are students with Autism
- Are students who have experienced trauma or severe mental health issues
- Are involved with DCFS or Department of Juvenile Justice

Now that we know who goes to these schools, it is important to understand how the schools fit into the broader education picture.

- General education teachers, school administrators, school counselors, and social workers work to address the needs of approximately 80% of the children
- Special education teachers and school psychologists are employed and licensed to meet the needs of an additional 18% of students
- Individuals who work in nonpublic therapeutic centers have highly specialized training to work with the **2% of low incidence students**
- Just as specialized services are needed in medical treatment, they are needed in education
- Nonpublic special education programs are an important part of a sophisticated delivery system
- Nonpublic special education programs are a crucial point on the continuum ensuring students get timely and effective services
- The students in nonpublic special education programs need more specialized treatment and education

THESE PROGRAMS WORK - EVEN WITH THE DIFFICULT POPULATION THEY SERVE!

- Over 70%* of the graduates from emotional/behavioral disorders education programs left with plans to pursue adult roles in the mainstream
- Close to 50%* of these students had plans to attend 4-year/2-year colleges or trade/technical schools.
- Placements are stabilized, 99%* of students were maintained in school without a significant break in services.
- Attendance is improved. Nonpublic special education program attendance averaged 84%*
- Average length of placement is one year*
- Drop out rate is less than 2%* of enrolled high school students
- Public school districts' are highly satisfied with the outcomes of their placements and have very strong relationships with their nonpublic school

* *Child Care Association/ IAPSEC 2014 Outcomes Study)*

HOW ARE THESE SCHOOLS PAID FOR?

The funding formula is specific to follow an individual child with intensive and high cost needs. Current law ensures that more money will go to districts with greater poverty. The funding formula has built in equity ensuring a proportionate share of local and state resources. The formula was written in a manner which has stood the test of time. With the exception of the Chicago block grant, funds are reimbursed to school districts only after the specific service has been provided. The dollars follow the child. In addition, there is a combination of local school district resources and state general revenue funds that pay for the services. The line item in the ISBE budget that contains the GRF funds is entitled "Private Tuition," and can be found in the "mandated categoricals," special education section of the budget.

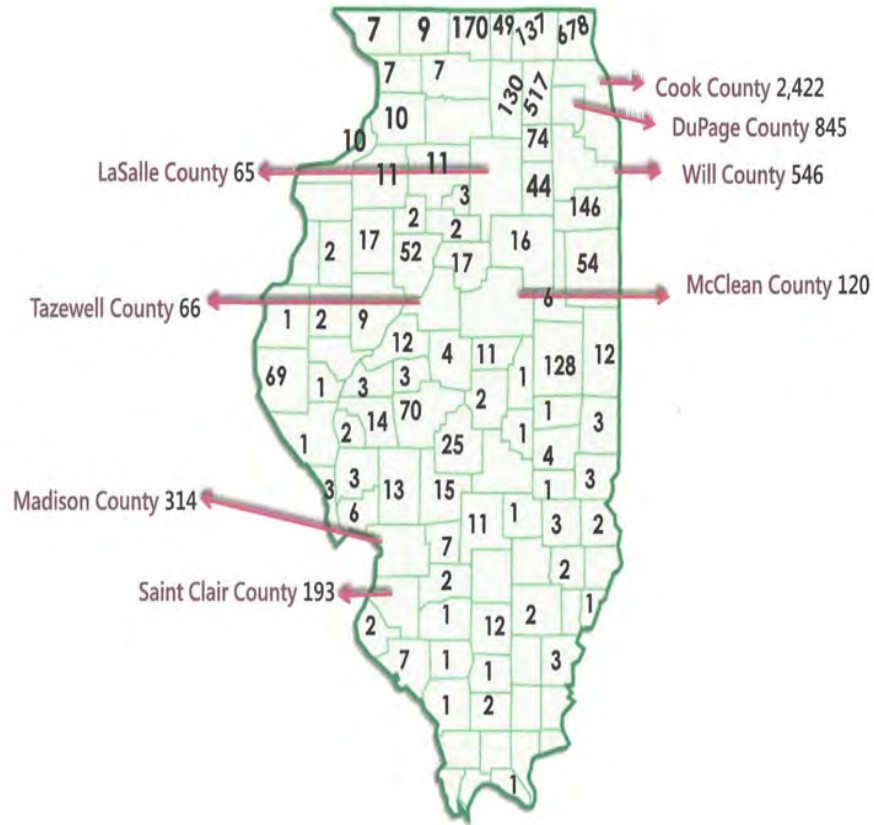
Testimony from the Senate Education Reform Hearings strongly recommended that catastrophic students be held out of any general funding formulas.

COST – EFFECTIVE

To provide rigorous cost containment, the State of Illinois has a rate-setting agency, the Illinois Purchased Care Review Board, established to ensure these programs are as cost-effective as possible.

- The rates set by this Agency are the sum total of what is available to nonpublic schools. Nonpublic school staff do not participate in the Teacher Retirement System, nor do these schools have access to the 32 different education sources that help fund public school district programs
- Rates are set based on 2 year-old audited costs, and these reported costs have caps in three different areas.

Students Outplaced by County



GEOGRAPHIC LOCATIONS OF STUDENTS SERVED

Illinois State Board of Education - 2015

PUBLIC POLICY 101: DO NOT CHANGE WHAT WORKS

Attempts have been made over the years to change this service delivery system. Each attempt has failed because members of the Illinois General Assembly and the administration are aware of how critical this education safety net is to their constituents. Attempts have been made to add more line items to this appropriation which would cause proration to reduce state funding to poverty impacted districts. In this current environment where every dollar counts, we need to maintain appropriations which are cost contained, equitable and have excellent outcomes. We have to ensure that all children are able to receive critical services they so desperately need.

SUMMARY

- Nonpublic special education programs provide a highly specialized service to the students with the greatest needs throughout the state
- Nonpublic special education programs currently serve about 8,000 students
- Nonpublic special education programs provide specialized service that is cost-effective resulting in positive outcomes for their students
- Nonpublic special education programs are mandated by Federal rule