



VCU

An Exploratory Study to Identify How the Children's Services Act Meets the Needs of Children in Special Education

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Background / Rationale

The Children's Services Act (CSA) was enacted in 1993 by the Virginia General Assembly and is overseen by the Office of Children's Services (OCS). The primary purpose of the enactment was to create a single-service delivery system to help meet the needs of children with serious emotional and behavioral needs (Leadford, 2001).

This study examined variables from two data sets that are collected by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and the Office of Children's Services (OCS). This study also examined the results of the Standards of the Learning by subject level that were obtained via the Freedom of Information Act.

Over the past 10 years, the CSA has become the primary funding source for children in need of Private Day Placements (Commission on Youth, 2015b). Three Federal Acts require that all children receive an appropriate education.

These Acts are as follows:

1. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

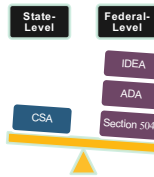
- Guarantees that all children receive a Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE)
- Establishes the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

2. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

- Title II prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability

3. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973

- Section 504 prohibits discrimination on the basis of a disability

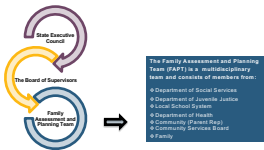


Background

Management of the CSA is maintained by two different types of structures:

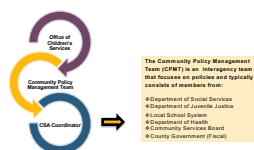
1. The Supervisory Structures - ensures all policies and regulations are being followed

- The CSA Supervisory Structure of the CSA:



2. The Administrative Structure - tracks the fiscal costs and completes all State reporting

- The Administrative Structure of the CSA:



Secondary Data Sets

Secondary Data from Two Data Sets were Examined

1. Virginia Department of Education (VDOE)

- Special Education Child Count Reports
 - o Data set is desegregated by disability category and locality
 - o 16 years of longitudinal data (2001+)
 - o Student counts based on a 'snap shot' made on December 1st
 - o Data reported to VDOE by each local education agency

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/reports_plans_stats/child_count/



2. Office of Children's Services (OCS)

- Statewide - Service Placement Type Report
 - o Data set allow desegregation by placement type, cost, referring agency,
 - o 10 years of longitudinal data (2009+)
 - o Data updated every fiscal quarter
 - o Data reported to OCS by CSA Coordinator for each locality

<http://csa.virginia.gov/OCSReports/Reports/DatasetReports.aspx>



Primary Data Set

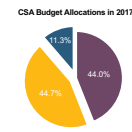
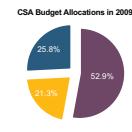
Primary Data was obtained from the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) via a Freedom of Information Act Request (FOIA). The data set contains:

- SOL pass rates by test content from the 2012-13 School Year until the 2016-17 School Year
- The Data set only examines students identified as a Student with a Disability in a Private Day Setting

Results

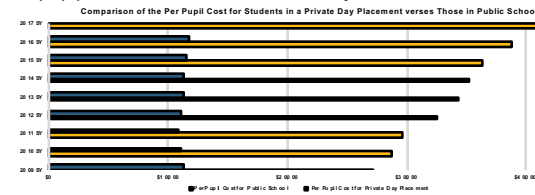
Key Findings From the Data Sets:

1. The budget allocations for Private Day Placements has increased from \$80M to \$157M per year

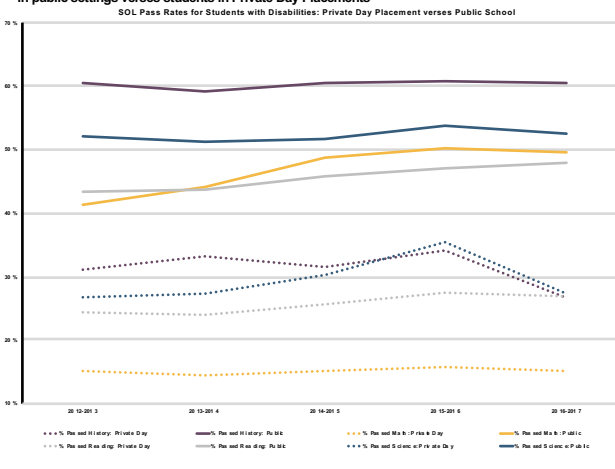


2. In 2017, tuition for Private Day Placements surpassed all other programs and services as the largest budgetary item in the CSA

3. The per pupil cost for student in Private Day Placements has increased 42.1% since 2009; however the per pupil cost for students in Public Schools has only increased 3.8%

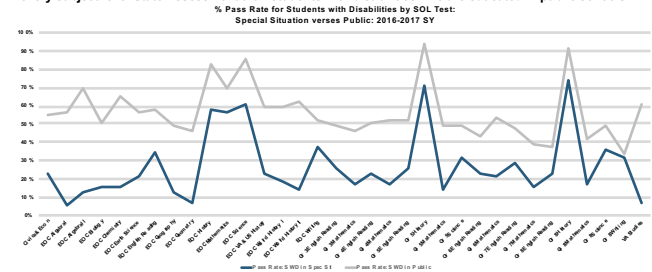


4. State Assessment (SOL) pass rates for children with disabilities are noticeably different for students in private settings versus students in Public Day Placements

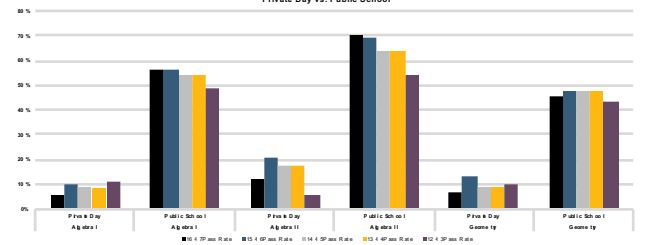


Conclusions

In the 2016-17 SY, students with disabilities and educated in Private Day Placements scored lower on every subject-level State Assessment than students with disabilities who are educated in public schools



For students with disabilities in Private Day Placements, the State Assessment pass rate in math has declined over the past 5 years in most of content areas. The State Assessment pass rate in math for students with disabilities in public schools has increased in all three content areas over the past 5 years



Implications

Families:

- Always consider the needs of the child first and foremost
- Ask about the academic outcomes for all enrolled students
- Develop a transition plan to either outline the return to public schools or identify post-secondary goals

Legislators:

- Consider conducting a feasibility study to examine the cost-benefit outcomes for students enrolled in Private Day Placements
- Consider publicizing the results of the standardized testing scores for students in Private Day Placements
- Consider publicizing the graduation rates and/or program completion rates for Private Day Placements

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