



# Special Education & Christian Schools: The Why & How

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TASH Regional Conference

April 22, 2016

Nashville, TN

# Objectives

- 1) Explain why Christian schools must serve children with special needs.
- 2) Discuss how children with special needs teach other children in the general education setting.
- 3) Identify public school obligations to private schools.
- 4) Explain initial steps in developing a special needs program.

Who is here today?

# Thoughts & Experiences

What are your thoughts about serving those with special needs/gifted?

What are your concerns?

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# My Story...



I didn't know it, but I was following...



.....as He called me through my music.

# And, then, the Lord sent Katie...

- Introduction to Special Needs
- Multi-modality
- The Challenges
- The Success
- The Lord's Call



# The Need

- ▶ 6.4 million public school students receiving special education services (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015)
- ▶ More identified in the last two decades than ever before (Swanson, 2008)
- ▶ Parents are seeking alternatives (Bacon & Erickson, 2010; Eigenbrood, 2005, & 2010)
- ▶ Services in Christian schools vary (Bacon & Erickson, 2010; Bello, 2006; DeFiore, 2006; Eigenbrood, 2005 & 2010; Lane, 2011; Lane & Jones 2014; Lane & Kinnison, 2014; Taylor, 2003 & 2005)

- Special education practices in Christian schools may include
  - 1) minimal formal services
  - 2) additional tuition for access to formal services
  - 3) private services at parent expense, and/or
  - 4) minimal consultation services from the public school (Bello, 2006; DeFiore, 2006; Eigenbrood, 2005; Lane, 2011; Taylor, 2003, 2005)

## Why we should...

- ▶ The Christian school community has a unique impetus
  - ▶ Welcoming all students with different learning abilities
  - ▶ Participate in God's work of reconciliation
    - ▶ A journey of transformation towards God (Lane & Kinnison, 2014)
    - ▶ "To be a sign and agency of reconciliation, the church must inspire and embody a deeper vocation of hope in broken places...while also offering care, hospitality and service" (Katangole & Rice, 2008, p. 148)

- ▶ As followers of Jesus
  - ▶ Respond with hospitality
  - ▶ Pohl (2002) states that those with disabilities are often detached from connections that give them a safe place in the world.
  - ▶ Need to touch the lives of those who are vulnerable
  
- ▶ Create an environment
  - ▶ Inclusion?
  - ▶ Belonging? (Switnon, 2012)

## Called to embrace...

“Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 25:31-46).

Vanier (1989) states, “A community which refuses to welcome, whether through fear, weariness, insecurity, a desire to cling to comfort, is dying spiritually” (pp. 266-7).

*Are we willing to die spiritually if we deny or ignore the calling to serve those vulnerable students in our Christian community?*

# Thoughts...



# Building a Partnership

- ▶ Best Practices
  - ▶ Time
  - ▶ Trust
  - ▶ Procedures
  
- ▶ Lane, J.M., & Kinnison, Q. P. (2014). *Welcoming children with special needs: Empowering Christian special education through purpose, policy, and procedures*. Bloomington, IN: Westbow Press.

# Special Education Law

- ▶ Education of All Handicapped Children Act
  - ▶ P.L. 94-142
  - ▶ Congress to fund 40% of special education costs
  - ▶ American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (2009)
    - ▶ Federal government funding 25%
- ▶ Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 1990
  - ▶ IDEA
  - ▶ Amended 1997
- ▶ Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act 2004
  - ▶ Still referred to as IDEA

## IDEA 1997

- ▶ Reauthorization
- ▶ Public schools are no longer required to provide services to children placed in private schools by their parents....however,
  - ▶ Child find obligations remain intact
  - ▶ Services may be provided
- ▶ What are the child obligations...

# LEA's Responsibilities

- ▶ Private schools that reside within the Local Education Agency (AKA, school district)
  - ▶ Child find activities
  - ▶ Provide some aspects of special education and related services

# What is Child Find?

- ▶ Defined in IDEA
  - ▶ A pro-active search to identify **ALL** children within the LEA who **MIGHT** be eligible to receive services
    - ▶ This includes children placed in private schools by their parents
- ▶ Activities
  - ▶ The agencies **MUST** contact and have **TIMELY** and **MEANINGFUL** consultations with appropriate representatives of **ALL** private school students (e.g. superintendents, principals, parents.)
  - ▶ Child Find efforts must be **EQUAL** to those for the children in the government schools.

# Consultation

- ▶ Consult with private school representatives on an annual basis
  - ▶ LEAs shall consult with representatives of private schools and parents regarding child find, *allocation of funds*, consultation process, and service determination
  - ▶ LEA shall obtain written affirmation of student enrollment
    - ▶ Identify children who might be eligible for services
    - ▶ Document number of students who are already identified by a public school
  - ▶ Determine services to be provided

# Education Plans

- ▶ Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
- ▶ Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)
  - ▶ Ages 0 - 3
- ▶ Individualized Transition Plan (ITP)
  - ▶ Federal law requires an ITP by the student's 16<sup>th</sup> birthday
- ▶ Individualized Service Plan (ISP)
  - ▶ Educational plan for a child who qualifies for special education and who has been placed in a private school by their parents

# Request for Testing

- Only a parent can make a request for testing
  - Private schools cannot
- Submit requests in writing
  - Date the letter
  - Parents should keep a copy of the letter for their records
- Include in the request
  - Report cards
  - Standardized assessments
  - Documented accommodations and/or modifications
  - Samples of student work
  - Documented tutorial or support services provided
  - Private school representative name and phone number

## Is testing warranted?

- ▶ Within 15 days of receipt of letter district must
  - ▶ Must review existing data regarding the student
  - ▶ Meet with the parent
    - ▶ Make determination if testing is warranted
    - ▶ Encourage parent to invite the private school representative
  - ▶ If testing is warranted, the team completes an Assessment Plan
    - ▶ May include
      - ▶ Academic
      - ▶ Neurological
      - ▶ Psychological
      - ▶ Social/Emotional
    - ▶ Parent must sign
- ▶ Federal law indicates that the assessment must be completed in 60 days

## If the child qualifies for special education services...

- ▶ The IEP, IFSP, and/or ITP must be completed in full
  - ▶ The district must offer FAPE
  - ▶ The education plan must include
    - ▶ What services will be provided
    - ▶ When/how often services will be provided
    - ▶ By whom services will be provided
      - ▶ Goals and objectives
      - ▶ How goals and objectives will be evaluated

## What about an ISP?

- ▶ The district MAY provide services through an ISP
  - ▶ Services as the public school site
  - ▶ Services at the private school site
- ▶ Services may include, but not limited to
  - ▶ Professional development for private school staff
  - ▶ For the student
    - ▶ Speech and language
    - ▶ Physical therapy
    - ▶ Occupational therapy
  - ▶ Services provided must be provided by a public school employee

## If an ISP will be written it must state...

- ▶ What services will be provided
  - ▶ When/how often services will be provided
  - ▶ Where the services will be provided
  - ▶ By whom services will be provided
    - ▶ Goals and objectives
    - ▶ How goals and objectives will be evaluated

## What about dual enrollment?

- The federal government has given the individual states the right to determine whether or not to provide dual enrollment status to students.

# Complaint Process

- ▶ LEA shall provide private schools with written response if disagreements between parties occurs.
  - ▶ Private schools can file a complaint with SEA
  - ▶ Can appeal to U.S. Secretary of Education (OSEP)

# What if testing is not warranted

- ▶ If the district determines testing is not warranted
  - ▶ Parents do have the right to file a complaint with the Compliancy Agency and/or Civil Rights Agency
    - ▶ Contact the SEA
    - ▶ If parents do file a complaint
      - ▶ Must do so in writing
      - ▶ Include
        - ▶ The Child's name
        - ▶ School the child is attending
        - ▶ Description of the problem
        - ▶ Propose a resolution to the problem
    - ▶ Parent must notify the LEA in writing that a complaint has been filed

# Child Find: Funding Allocations

- ▶ Child find determines two very important numbers
  - ▶ A = the total number of students in private schools ELIGIBLE for services
  - ▶ B = the total number of student in all schools within the LEA ELIGIBLE for services
  - ▶ The ratio  $A/B$  is the proportion of the federal grant applicable to private school students as a group
- ▶ IDEA allows, but does not require, the allocated funds to be augmented by the state and/or local funds consistent with state law and local policy

# Allocations through annual consultation

- An annual count must occur each year
  - Between September 1<sup>st</sup> and December 1<sup>st</sup>
  - The fall count determines the budget for the next year's services
- Consultation **MUST** occur with representatives of private school students to decide:
  1. What services will be provided?
  2. How the services will be provided?
  3. How the services provided will be evaluated?
  4. Which students will receive services?

## Section 504

- ▶ Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- ▶ Office of Civil Rights
- ▶ Anti-discrimination law
- ▶ Prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability
- ▶ Private schools obligation
  - ▶ Receipt of federal funding
  - ▶ Includes USDA
- ▶ No funding is provided

# Developing and refining programs

- ▶ Strategic Planning
- ▶ The first step in effective program development
  - ▶ What is the vision for a program?
  - ▶ What is the purpose for a program?
  - ▶ How do we develop a sustainable and effective program?
  - ▶ Who do we serve?

## The Goal

Our goal is to research, design, and implement a program for special needs students at Calvary Elementary School by September 2018.

## The Steps

- ▶ “A Committee will research the existing need (pro/con) for a Special Needs Program at St. Paul's Elementary School between May 1 and June 30, 2016.”
- ▶ “A Committee will research existing special needs programs in private and public school settings and compile an analysis of those programs between August 15 and October 1, 2016.”
- ▶ “A Committee will study the Existing Programs Report and compare these programs to the needs of the St. Paul's community, search for ways to apply what others have done in our own situation between October 1 – November 15, 2016.”
- ▶ “A committee will investigate, plan, and implement fund raising activities for the proposed Special Needs Program between November 15, 2016 and January 15, 2017.”
- ▶ “A Committee will draft a report to the Board of Education detailing the proposed Special Needs Program for St. Paul's School by February 29, 2017.”
- ▶ “A committee will respond to the Board of Education' recommendations and submit a final proposal for the Special Needs Program by March 31, 2017”

# The Objectives

- ▶ Define Measureable Steps
  - ▶ Define step by step in terms of milestones along an established timetable
  - ▶ Measurements of progress along the way
  - ▶ Measurable steps are designed to identify
    - ▶ The Risk
    - ▶ The change or impact
    - ▶ The inhibitors or barriers counteracting your efforts

## Next Steps: Program Sustainability

- ▶ Policies
- ▶ Procedures
- ▶ Growth
- ▶ Curriculum
- ▶ Professional Development

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