

**Special Needs Students in First Nations Schools:
Inclusion in School Based
Special Education Programs**

**Submitted to:
First Nations Education Steering Committee
& First Nations Schools Association**

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Acknowledgement

The Special Education Program Evaluation set out to describe the special needs population and to determine the degree to which special need students were supported by Special Education Program (SEP) school based Workplans. To accomplish that task all First Nations Schools receiving SEP funding were sent an evaluation survey. The response back was excellent as over 100 schools returned completed surveys. My thanks and gratitude to all the administrators and teachers for their time and effort in completing the evaluation survey. Your efforts provided the information presented in this report. I also want to express my thanks to the FNESC/FNSA staff and in particular Barb O'Neill who coordinated the collection of the forms and the input of the data. A special thanks to Kelly Kitchen who through her leadership and consultation guided the evaluation from an idea to a reality.

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Background

Each year the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and the First Nations School Association (FNSEA) produce an informative and comprehensive final report on special education funding, expenditure and program activities in British Columbia. That report is based on information from three sources:

1. The annual Special Educational Workplans developed by each school receiving Special Education Program funding.
2. The Regional Managing Organization (RMO) Annual Report submitted to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) which is compiled from school based information provided in the First Nations School Annual Reporting Form.
3. The annual Coordinated Student Assessment report.

The Regional Report to INAC and the Coordinated Assessment Report provide the data to compile BC regional demographic information on:

- The number of special education students
- The number and composition of teaching staff
- The number of students referred and waiting for formal assessments.

In the 2005/2006 Special Education Program (SEP) final report for the BC region, it was indicated that approximately 24% of the First Nations schools population had been identified as High Cost special education students. It was also noted in that report, that 24% was likely an under estimate given that there were roughly 400 students referred, but not yet assessed.

The Special Education Workplan, developed at each school, provides activity descriptions, associated costs, and sources of revenue of the special educational programs provided in the First Nations schools across BC. In addition the Workplans provide information on expected outcomes and the number of students in each program/activity. In the 2005/06 SEP final report for the BC region it was reported that \$6,820,986 was spent on direct services for students. \$5,701,741 or 85% of the funding came from SEP allocation and the additional 15% or \$1,448,093 came from other sources of funding.

Traditionally special education resources have been allocated **after** students have been assessed and classified into special education categories. An alternate proactive approach called the “Intervention Based Approach” is used to allocate special education resources to First Nations Schools in BC. This approach was adopted by First Nations in BC in an effort to maximize the impact of resources and services for students with special needs. The Intervention Based Approach allocates special education resource to schools using a base-plus-per capita formula and is accessed upon submission and approval of a Special Education Workplan. This approach to allocation enables schools to develop preventive programs as well as remedial programs. The Special Education Program Workplans submitted by schools provide clear descriptions of the programs and activities provided; however, they **do not** indicate which students are receiving benefit from those programs.

Purpose

The current evaluation was guided by the following three purposes.

1. To develop preliminary estimates of the number of special needs students by special education category.
2. To describe the learning and social emotional needs found within First Nation Schools.
3. To determine the degree to which special needs students were included in programs and/or receiving services from special education initiatives outlined on the SEP Workplans.*

* While the evaluation investigated the degree to which special needs students were included in SEP programs and/or activities it was beyond the scope of the current study to examine quality, adequacy, or budgetary arrangements of SEP Workplan activities.

Method

To answer the questions in the evaluation it was necessary to determine, **at a student level**, which students in a school were special needs students and the SEP activities in which they were included. In planning the evaluation, it was decided that it would be useful to determine the degree to which **both** formally assessed and identified special education students and not yet formally assessed students that the school believed had significant special needs were supported by SEP activities.

A survey form was sent to all First Nation schools that submitted SEP Workplans for the 2006/2007 school year. The survey form collected data that indicated which students were formally assessed and identified as special needs students and which students were not yet formally assessed but judged to have significant special needs. The survey form also collected categorical information that matched students learning and behavioral characteristics to standard Special Needs categories. In addition the form collected the school based special education programs and activities each student participated in.

(Appendix 1 contains a copy of the Special Education Evaluation Form and the accompanying instructions).

A Screening Template that lists the key behavioral and learning characteristics in six broad areas of special needs (Learning Disabilities, Communication Disorders, Behavior Disorders, Intellectual Disabilities, Physical Disabilities , and Sensory Impairment in Hearing and Vision) and in Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders and Autism Spectrum Disorders was provided to each school. The function of the Screening Template was to enable the schools to more consistently judge which students, that were not yet formally assessed, would likely be identified as special needs students. (Appendix 2 contains a copy of the Screening Template.)

The process of completing the Special Education Evaluation included two steps:

- Step one-- Schools were asked to match the learning and behavioral characteristics of the Special Education categories to the learning and social emotional needs exhibited by their students.
- Step two-- In order to develop estimates of the number of students in each Special Education Category schools were asked to select the Special Needs Category on the Screening Template that best matched the student's special needs.

When analyzing the data it became apparent that most schools did not indicate a single Special Needs Category that best described the student's special needs, but often chose more than one category.

When estimates of the number of students in Special Needs Categories are developed a student is normally counted in only **one** category. Given that schools did not indicate the Special Needs Category that best characterized each student, the following rules were used in determining Special Needs Students by Category.

1. If a student was identified as a student with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder **AND** also identified as a student with Intellectual Disabilities, Behavior Disorders (Acting Out), Learning Disabilities, or Communication Disorders, that student was counted as a student with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.
 - Rationale for the rule: Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder refers to disorders that incorporate key characteristics in Intellectual Disability, Behavior Disorders (Acting Out), Learning Disabilities, and Communication Disorders (Ministry of Education, 2006, Awareness of Students with Diverse Learning Needs).
2. If a student was identified as a student with Autism Spectrum Disorder **AND** also identified as a student with Intellectual Disabilities, Behavior Disorders (Acting Out), Learning Disabilities, or Communication Disorders, that student was counted as a student with Autism Spectrum Disorders.
 - Rationale for the rule: Autism Syndrome Disorder refers to disorders that incorporate key characteristic in Intellectual Disability, Behavior Disorders (Acting Out), Learning Disabilities, and Communication Disorder (Ministry of Education, 2006, Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines).
3. If a student was identified as a student with an Intellectual Disability **AND** also as a student with a Learning Disability or Communication Disorder; that student was counted as a student with an Intellectual Disability.
 - Rationale for the rule: Intellectual Disability refers to a disability with overall cognitive delay, hence it is expected that communication and learning will be delayed as a function of Intellectual Disability (Ministry of Education, 2006, Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines).
4. If a student was identified as having the characteristic of **BOTH** a Learning Disability **AND** a Communication Disorder they were counted as follows: students in preschool, kindergarten grade1 and grade 2 were counted as a student with Communication Disorders; students in grades 3 thru 12 and adult learners were counted as a student with a Learning Disability.
 - Rationale for the rule: The largest proportion of students with Learning Disabilities experience persistent problems in learning to read. Language competence and in particular phonological ability is a prerequisite skill for learning to read. Hence language deficits in early childhood and early primary grades often result in Learning Disabilities in late primary and throughout the rest of schooling (Council for Exceptional Children, 2001: Children with Communication Disorders; Ministry of Education, 2006, Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines).

While the decision rules eliminate overlapping designations they do not eliminate legitimate co-occurring special needs conditions within a given student. Hence “Designation by Category” provides an over estimate of the number of students per category. When reading the results section it is important to note whether :

- The “Number of Special Needs Students” is being reported

OR

- The “Number of Special Needs Designations” is being reported.

The “Number of Special Needs Students” does provide a population estimate, whereas the “Number of Special Needs Designations” is an over estimate due to legitimate co-occurring special needs conditions.

Limitations

One of the purposes of the evaluation was to estimate the number of special needs students by Special Education categories. A significant limitation of the current evaluation is that the estimates of the number of special needs by category were determined by decision rules rather than evaluation data. This limitation results in logically based estimates rather than empirically based estimates of special needs students by category. While this is a significant limitation in the current data; an analysis of the proportions of special needs students by category in the 2005/06 Coordinated Student Assessment Report closely matches the proportions reported in the current evaluation, providing limited, but useful, corroboration.

Table 1 provides a comparison of special needs students by category between the empirically derived data reported in the 2005/06 Coordinated Student Assessment Report and the logically derived data in the current evaluation.

Table 1
Proportion of Special Needs Students by
Special Education Category

Estimated Percentages			Actual Percentages		
Decision Rules Special Needs Evaluation			Data Coordinated Student Assessment Report		
High Incidence/High Cost Special Needs Students					
Learning Disabilities	26%	41.8%	Learning Disabilities	48%	
Communication Disorder*	15.8%				
Beh. Acting Out**	16.2%	25%	Beh. Moderate**	18.4%	24.8%
Beh. Internalizing**	8.6%		Beh. Intensive**	6.4%	
Intellectual Delay	16.3%	24.9%	Intell. Delay Mild	14.4%	19.2%
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum	8.6%		Intell. Delay Severe	4.8%	
Low Incidence/High Cost Special Needs Students					
Physically Disabled		2.6%	Physically Disabled	4.8%	
Visually Impaired		1.4%	Visually Impaired	1.0%	
Hearing Impaired		2.6%	Hearing Impaired	1.8%	
Autism Spectrum		1.4%	Autism Spectrum	0%	
Total Low Incidence	8%		Total Low Incidence	7.6%	

* There is no specific category for Communication Disorders in the BC provincial system and students are often included in a learning disability category.

** Both Moderate and Intensive Behaviour Disorders refer to the degree of the disorder as opposed to the kind of disorder such as Acting Out or Internalizing. Both Moderate and Intensive Behaviour Disorders include both Acting Out and Internalizing.

A review of the table indicates that there is a higher percentage of Learning Disabled Students in the 2005/06 Coordinated Student Assessment Report. It is worth noting that in the 2005/06 Report Dr. More noted that the percentage of Learning Disabled students was higher than usual. The BC Special Education category framework does not include Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders. The most logical place to group Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders is with Intellectual Disabilities. The increased percentage in Intellectual Disabilities in the evaluation data is likely due to the inclusion of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders. In reviewing the Low Incidence Disability conditions it must be remembered that they represent small numbers of students in each category and small real differences will create larger percent differences. The overall percentages of Low Incidence students between the two approaches is only a .4% difference.

Results

Response Rate

The “Special Education Program Evaluation Form” was sent to all First Nations Schools that received “Special Education Program” funding (N=123). 106 schools returned completed evaluations for an overall response rate of 86%. Table 2 below summarizes the response rate for both school response and proportion of the First Nations school population.

Table 2
Proportion of Schools and Student Population in the Study

	Number of Schools	Student Population	Percent of Schools	Percent of Student Population
Evaluations Sent	123	6393		
Evaluations Returned	106	5608	86%	88%
Missing Data	17	785	14%	12%

While the response rate is high, there were regional differences in response rate. In two regions - Kootenay-Okanagan and Secwepemic/St'at'l'imc/Nlaka'pamux - the response rate was 100%, whereas in two other regions - Haida/Tsimshian/Haisla/Nisga'a and Tsilhqot'in/Carrier/Sekani the response rate was approximately 75%. Table 3 below summarizes the response rate for both schools response and proportion of the First Nation school population by region.

Table 3
Proportion of Schools and Student Population by Region in the Study

Regions	# of Students	# of Schools	# of Students Missing	# of Schools Missing	% of Students Missing	% of Schools Missing
Gitskan/Wet/suwet'en	524	9	125	1	23.8%	11%
Haida/Tsimshian/Haisla/Nisga'a	577	14	172	4	28.8%	28.6%
Kaska/Dene/Tahltan/Tagish/Inland Tlingit	501	10	84	2	16.7%	20.0%
Kootenay/Okanagan	391	8	0	0	0%	0%
Kwakiutl/Heiltsuk/Nuxalk/Oweekeno	829	12	12	1	1.4%	8.3%
Nuu-chah-nulth/Coast Salish	1917	30	312	5	16.3%	16.7%
Secwepemic/St'at'l'imc/Nlaka'pamux	1137	24	0	0	0%	0%
Tsilhqot'in/Carrier/Sekani	558	16	121	4	21.2%	25.0%

An overall response rate of 86% with no region below 70% strongly suggest that the numbers reported by responding schools provide a reliable indication of the overall population of First Nation special needs students

Overall Number and Percents of Special Needs Students

The overall student population responding was 5608 students. The principals and teachers in those schools identified 1672 special needs students which represents approximately 30% of the student population. 56% (N=936) of those students had been formally assessed and identified as special needs students, whereas 44% (N=737) had been informally assessed and judged by principals and teachers to fit the learning and social emotional characteristics of special needs students. Table 4 and Table 5 summarize the data in a tabular form.

Table 4
Proportion of
Special Needs Students

Number of Students In Surveyed Schools	5608	Percent of Special Needs Students	29.8%
Number of Identified Special Needs Students	1672		

Table 5
Identification Criteria
Formally Assessed vs. Informally Identified

Assessment Conditions Across Special Needs Students			
Assessed/ Identified		Informally Assessed	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent
936	56%	737	44%

Overall Number and Percent of Special Needs Designations

Students with special needs can exhibit both learning disabilities and social/emotional problems that are congruent with more than one special needs category. As well, they may also have a co-occurring physical or sensory impairment. Students with co-occurring special needs are often more difficult to teach, hence it is important in describing special needs in classrooms to reflect the number of special needs designations as well as the number of special students.

In the current evaluation, 27% of the students identified as having special needs (454 students) were also identified as having co-occurring special needs. Table 6 below provides an overall summary of the co-occurrence.

Table 6
Number of Special Needs Designations

Number of Special Needs Designations	2127	Percentage of Times A Student Had More Than One Designation	27%
Number of Identified Special Needs Students	1672		

69% of the students (314 students) with co-occurring special needs exhibited acting out behavior in conjunction with other special needs. The two designations that overlapped most often were Acting Out Behavior Disorders and Intellectual Disability. Table 7 summarizes the co-occurrence of Behavior Disorder Acting Out and Internalizing with other special needs designation.

Table 7
**Concurrence of Behaviors with Other
Special Needs Conditions**

	High Incidence/High Cost Special Needs										Low Incidence/High Cost Special Needs							
	Comm. Disorders		Learning Disabilities		Intellectual Disability		Behavior Disorders		Fetal Alcohol Spectrum		Autism		Physically Disabled		Visually Impaired		Hearing Impaired	
							Internalizing											
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Behavior Disorders Acting Out (314)	42	13%	93	30%	109	35%	50	16%					9	3%	8	2.5%	3	1%
Internalizing (234)	19	8%	33	14%	55	23%	Acting Out		39	17%	5	2%	12	5%	10	4%	11	5%
							#	%										
							50	21%										

While acting out behavior co-occurred most often with intellectual disability it is also worth noting that acting out co-occurred with learning disability in 109 students. It is also worth noting that 50 students were identifying or displaying both acting out and internalizing disorders.

Special Needs Designation by Category

The special needs designation used in the evaluation were developed to both match British Columbia Provincial definition of “Special Education Categories” and to reflect the pattern of special needs within First Nation communities. Table 8 lists the special needs designation and sources for the learning and behavioural characteristics listed in the Special Needs Template.

Table 8
**Special Needs Designations and
Sources of Definitions**

Special Needs Designation	Source of Special Needs Designation
Learning Disabilities	BC Special Education Category
Behavior Disorders Acting Out Internalizing	BC Special Education Category
Intellectual Disability	BC Special Education Category
Autism Spectrum Disorders	BC Special Education Category
Physical Disability	BC Special Education Category
Hearing Impairment	BC Special Education Category
Visual Impairment	BC Special Education Category
Communication Disorders	Ontario Special Education Category
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders	MOE 2006 Awareness of Students with Diverse Learning Needs

Seven of the nine designations match B.C. Special Education categories, the remaining two reflect factors within First Nations communities. As described in the method section, decision rules were used in assigning students to special needs categories that eliminated overlap. When students were indicated as having both communication disorders and learning disabilities they were designated as Communication Disorders in grades pre Kindergarten, Kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2 and as Learning Disabled in grades 3-12 and adult education. When students were indicated as Intellectually Disabled or Communication Disordered **and** Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disordered they were only designated as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disordered. Hence the addition of the two categories describing facts in First Nation communities did not artificially inflate the overall number of special needs designations.

Table 9 displays both the number and percentage of overall special needs designations by category as well as the overall percentage of the total school population by category. In addition, figure 1 graphically displays the overall percentage of the school population of each special needs designation.

Table 9
Special Needs Designation
by Category

Special Needs Category	Number of Special needs Designations	% of Overall Special Needs Designations	% of Overall School Population
Communication Disorder	337	15.8%	6.0%
Learning Disability	553	26.0%	9.8%
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder	183	8.6%	3.3%
Intellectual Disability	347 (Severe 63)	16.3%	6.2%
Behavior Disorder Acting Out	344 (Severe 63)	16.2%	6.1%
Behavior Disorder Internalizing	188 (Severe 21)	8.8%	3.4%
Autism Spectrum Disorder	33 (Severe 4)	1.4%	.6%
Physical Disability	56 (Severe 7)	2.6%	1.0%
Hearing Impairment	56 (Severe 6)	2.6%	1.0%
Visual Impairment	30 (Severe 5)	1.4%	.5%

Figure 1

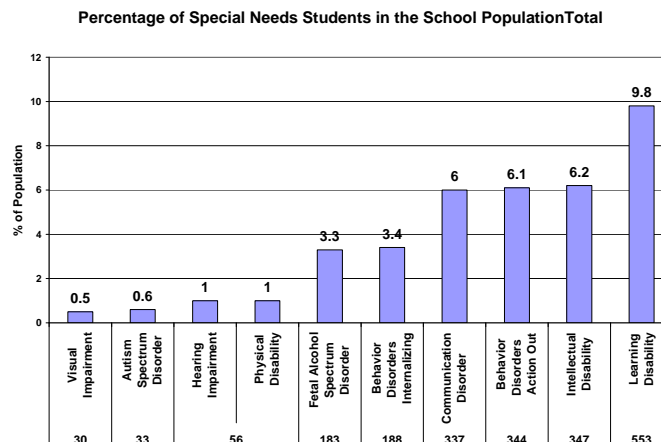


Table 10 describes the proportion of students who were formally assessed and identified as special needs versus the number who were informally assessed and judged as special needs by designation.

Table 10
Identification Criteria
Across Special Needs Designations

Special Needs Designation by Category	Assessment Condition			
	Assessed/Identified		Informally Identified	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Communication Disorder	199	59%	138	41%
Learning Disability	306	55%	247	45%
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder	113	62%	70	38%
Intellectual Disability	211	61%	136	39%
Behavior Disorder Acting Out	193	56%	151	44%
Behavior Disorder Internalizing	85	45%	103	55%
Autism Spectrum Disorder	21	64%	12	36%
Physical Disability	42	75%	14	25%
Hearing Impairment	44	79%	12	21%
Visual Impairment	21	70%	9	30%

Two thirds to three quarters of the students designated in low incidence categories (i.e. Autism Spectrum Disorder, physical disability and hearing and visual impairment) were formally assessed. In addition, over 60% of the students designated as either Intellectually Disabled or Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder were formally assessed. The only designation below 50% formally identified was Internalizing Behaviour Disorders.

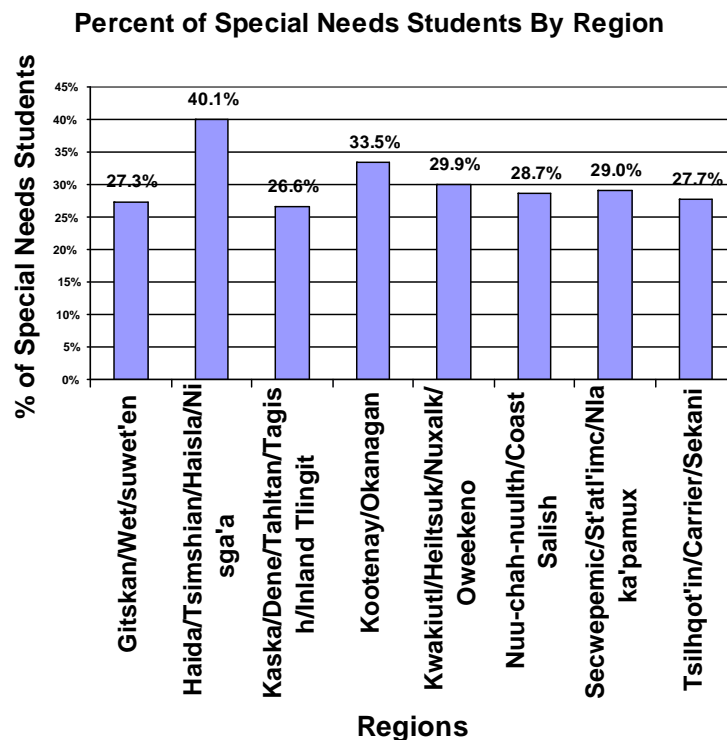
Regional Percentage and Overall Number of Special Students

Table 11 and figure 2 provide both the number and percentage of special needs students by region.

Table 11
Regional Breakdown of Special Needs Students

Regional Names	Regional Population	Number of Students Identified	% of Population Identified
Gitskan/Wet/suwet'en	399	109	27.3%
Haida/Tsimshian/Haisla/Nisga'a	405	165	40.1%
Kaska/Dene/Tahltan/Tagish/Inland Tlingit	417	111	26.6%
Kootenay/Okanagan	391	131	33.5%
Kwakiutl/Heiltsuk/Nuxalk/Oweekeno	817	244	29.9%
Nuu-chah-nuulth/Coast Salish	1605	461	28.7%
Secwepemic/St'at'imc/Nlaka'pamux	1137	330	29.0%
Tsilhqot'in/Carrier/Sekani	437	121	27.7%
Provincial Totals	5608	1672	29.8%

figure 2



The overall First Nation School provincial percentage of designated special needs students is approximately 30%. While the other seven regions all reported percentages within 3 to 4% of the provincial First Nation School average. The Haida/Tsimshian/Haisla/Nisga'a reported that 40% of their students had designated special needs.

Table 12 shows the proportion of students by region who were formally assessed and identified versus the number who were informally assessed and judged as special needs.

Table 12
Regional Breakdown of
Identification Criteria

Regional Names	Number of Special Needs Students in the Region	Regional Population	Informally Identified		Assessed Identified		% of Special Needs Students Assessed
			Number	% In Region	Number	% In Region	
Gitskan/Wet/suwet'en	109	399	67	16.8%	42	10.5%	38.5%
Haida/Tsimshian/Haisla/Nisga'a	165	405	46	11.4%	119	29.4%	72.1%
Kaska/Dene/Tahltan/Tagish/Inland Tlingit	111	417	45	10.8%	66	15.8%	59.4%
Kootenay/Okanagan	131	391	62	15.9%	69	17.6%	33.5%
Kwakiutl/Heiltsuk/Nuxalk/Oweekeno	244	817	92	11.3%	152	18.6%	62.3%
Nuu-chah-nuulth/Coast Salish	461	1605	212	13.2%	249	15.5%	54.0%
Secwepemic/St'atl'imc/Nlaka'pamux	330	1137	159	14.0%	171	15.0%	51.8%
Tsilhqot'in/Carrier/Sekani	121	437	53	12.1%	68	15.6%	56.2%
Provincial	1672	5608	736	13.1%	936	16.7%	55.6%
Totals							

The provincial percentage of students who were formally assessed and identified is approximately 56%. The two regions with the highest percentage of formally assessed students were Haida/Tsimshian/Hailsa/Nisga'a (72%) and Kwakiutl/Heiltsuk/Naxalk/Oweekens (62%). The two regions with the lowest percentage were Kootenay/Okanagan (33.5%) and Gitskan/Wet/Suwet'en (38.5%). The other four regions were within 4% of the provincial average.

Regional Breakdown of Special Needs Designation by Category

Table 13A provides percent comparisons by regions for students designated as exhibiting Communication Disorders or Learning Disabilities.

Regional Breakdown of High Incidence High Cost Students

Table 13A

Regional Names	Regional Population	Communication Disorders		Learning Disabilities	
		Number	% In Region	Number	% In Region
Gitskan/Wet/suwet'en	399	16	4.0%	39	9.7%
Haida/Tsimshian/Haisla/Nisga'a	405	52	12.8%	77	19.0%
Kaska/Dene/Tahltan/Tagish/Inland Tlingit	417	22	5.3%	32	7.7%
Kootenay/Okanagan	391	35	8.9%	29	7.4%
Kwakiutl/Heiltsuk/Nuxalk/Oweekeno	817	25	3.0%	94	11.5%
Nuu-chah-nuulth/Coast Salish	1605	116	7.2%	152	9.5%
Secwepemic/St'at'imc/Nlaka'pamux	1137	53	4.6%	93	8.2%
Tsilhqot'in/Carrier/Sekani	437	18	4.1%	37	8.5%
Provincial Totals	5608	337	6.0%	553	9.8%

The provincial First Nations school average of students designated as exhibiting a communication disorder is 6%. While the other seven regions all reported percentages within 3% of the provincial average, the Haida/Tsimshian/Haisla/Nisga'a reported that approximately 13% of their students exhibited communication disorders. The provincial First Nations school average of students designated as exhibiting learning disabilities is approximately 10%. While the other seven regions all reported percentages within 2% of the provincial average, the Haida/Tsimshian/Haisla/Nisga'a reported that 19% of their students exhibited learning disabilities.

Table 13B and Table 13C provide percentage comparisons by region for students designated as Behavioral Disordered, Intellectually Disabled or Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disordered

Table 13B

Regional Names	Regional Population	Behavior Acting Out		Behavior Internalizing	
		Number	% In Region	Number	% In Region
Gitskan/Wet/suwet'en	399	23	5.8%	13	3.3%
Haida/Tsimshian/Haisla/Nisga'a	405	19	4.7%	15	3.7%
Kaska/Dene/Tahltan/Tagish/Inland Tlingit	417	23	5.5%	6	1.4%
Kootenay/Okanagan	391	28	7.2%	22	5.6%
Kwakiutl/Heiltsuk/Nuxalk/Oweekeno	817	54	6.6%	25	3.1%
Nuu-chah-nuulth/Coast Salish	1605	115	7.2%	42	2.6%
Secwepemic/St'atl'imc/Nlaka'pamux	1137	63	5.5%	45	3.9%
Tsilhqot'in/Carrier/Sekani	437	19	4.3%	20	4.6%
Provincial Totals	5608	344	6.1%	188	3.4%

Table 13C

Regional Names	Regional Population	Intellectual Disability		Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders	
		Number	% In Region	Number	% In Region
Gitskan/Wet/suwet'en	399	22	5.5%	21	5.3%
Haida/Tsimshian/Haisla/Nisga'a	405	14	3.5%	10	2.5%
Kaska/Dene/Tahltan/Tagish/Inland Tlingit	417	23	5.5%	26	6.2%
Kootenay/Okanagan	391	13	3.3%	15	3.8%
Kwakiutl/Heiltsuk/Nuxalk/Oweekeno	817	58	7.1%	20	2.4%
Nuu-chah-nuulth/Coast Salish	1605	84	5.2%	43	2.7%
Secwepemic/St'atl'imc/Nlaka'pamux	1137	102	8.9%	27	2.4%
Tsilhqot'in/Carrier/Sekani	437	31	7.1%	21	4.8%
Provincial Totals	5608	347	6.2%	183	3.3%

The provincial average for Acting Out Behaviour Disorders is approximately 6% and the average for Internalizing Behaviour Disorder is approximately 3.5%, for a combined Behaviour Disorder incidence rate in First Nations schools of 9.5%. All regions reported percentages within 2% of the provincial First Nations school average. It is worth noting that the First Nations percentage of designated students with Behaviour Disorders is at the high end of standard reported estimates that range from 4% to 10% (Hallahan, D.P. & Kauffman, J.M., 2003).

The provincial First Nations school average for the percentage of students designated as Intellectually Disabled is approximately 6%, and for students designated as exhibiting characteristics of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum, it is approximately 3%, making the provincial First Nations school average approximately 9%. It is worth noting that the First Nations percentage of designated students with Intellectual Disability is above the standard reported estimate of 3% (BC Ministry of Education: *Students with Special Needs: How Are we Doing? Province – Public Schools Only (2006); and, Student Statistics 2002/03 to 2006/07 (2006)*).

Table 14a and 14b provides a comparison by region for students designated as exhibiting the characteristics of an Autism Spectrum Disorder or being Physically Disabled, Hearing Impaired or Visually Impaired.

Table 14a
Regional Breakdown of
Low Incidence High Cost Designations

Regional Names	Regional Population	Autism Spectrum Disorders				Physical Disability			
		Mod	Severe	Total	% in Region	Mod	Severe	Total	% in Region
Gitskan/Wet/suwet'en	399	2		2	.5%	5		5	1.3%
Haida/Tsimshian/Haisla/Nisga'a	405	2		2	.5%	2	1	3	.7%
Kaska/Dene/Tahltan/Tagish/Inland Tlingit	417					5		5	1.2%
Kootenay/Okanagan	391					1		1	.3%
Kwakiutl/Heiltsuk/Nuxalk/Oweekeno	817	4	1	5	.6%	7	1	8	1.0%
Nuu-chah-nulth/Coast Salish	1605	6	1	7	.4%	7	1	8	.5%
Secwepemic/St'at'imc/Nlaka'pamux	1137	1	2	3	.3%	15	4	19	1.7%
Tsilhqot'in/Carrier/Sekani	437	14		14	2.3%	7		7	1.6%
Provincial Totals	5608	29	4	33	.6%	49	7	56	1.0%

Table 14b

Regional Names	Regional Population	Hearing Impairment				Visual Impairment			
		Mod	Severe	Total	% in Region	Mod	Severe	Total	% in Region
Gitskan/Wet/suwet'en	399	2	1	3	.8%				0%
Haida/Tsimshian/Haisla/Nisga'a	405	10		10	2.5%	1		1	.2%
Kaska/Dene/Tahltan/Tagish/Inland Tlingit	417	2		2	.5%	1		1	.2%
Kootenay/Okanagan	391	6		6	1.5%	2	1	3	.8%
Kwakiutl/Heiltsuk/Nuxalk/Oweekeno	817	3		3	.4%	5	1	6	.7%
Nuu-chah-nuulth/Coast Salish	1605	7	3	10	.6%	4	2	6	.4%
Secwepemic/St'atl'imc/Nlaka'pamux	1137	13	1	14	1.2%	11	1	12	1.1%
Tsilhqot'in/Carrier/Sekani	437	7	1	8	1.8%	1		1	.2%
Provincial Totals	5608	50	6	56	1.0%	25	5	30	.5%

The Tsilhqot'in/Carrier/Sekani region reported that 2.3% of its student population exhibited the characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder, that percentage is approximately four times the average of .6%. The Secwepemic/St'atl'imc/Nlaka'pamux reported the highest percentage of physically disabled students (1.7%) closely followed by the Tsilhqot'in/Carrier/Sekani (1.6%). The provincial average of physically disabled students is 1%. The Haida/Tsimshian/Haisla/Nisga'a reported the highest percentage of hearing impaired students (2.5%) closely followed by the Tsilhqot'in/Carrier/Sekani (1.8%). The provincial average of hearing impairment is 1%. The Secwepemic/St'atl'imc/Nlaka'pamux reported the highest percentage of visually impaired students (1.1%). The provincial average of visually impaired students is .5%. Considering both the overall number and percentage of low incidence/high cost students, the Tsilhqot'in/Carrier/Sekani region reported a higher overall percentage than the other regions.

Male Female Proportions Across Special Needs Designation

Table 15 shows the overall male to female proportions of special needs students.

**Table 15
Gender Breakdown**

Gender	Number	Percent
Male	1046	63%
Female	613	37%
Total Number of Special Needs Students	1659	

Close to two thirds of the students identified as special needs were male. This rate is consistent with most estimates of male to female special needs students.

Table 16 shows the proportion of males to females across special needs designations.

**Table 16
Gender Across Special Needs Designations**

Special Needs Designations by Category	Gender			
	Male		Female	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Communication Disorder	225	67%	110	33%
Learning Disability	325	59%	226	41%
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder	125	68%	58	32%
Intellectual Disability	225	65%	119	35%
Behavior Disorder Acting Out	255	76%	81	24%
Behavior Disorder Internalizing	110	59%	75	41%
Autism Spectrum Disorder	29	88%	4	12%
Physical Disability	31	55%	25	45%
Hearing Impairment	36	64%	20	36%
Visual Impairment	17	57%	13	43%

Five of the ten special needs designations (Communication Disorders, Learning Disabilities, Intellectual Disability, Behavior Disorders- Internalizing, and Hearing Impairment) are within 4% of the overall population proportions. The ratio of males to females in Behavior Disorders/acting out is four males to one female. A four to one ratio is consistent with reports of the rates of male to female who exhibit acting out behaviour. The male to female ratio exhibiting Internalizing Behaviour Disorder is approximately three males to two females. The ratio of males to females identified as exhibiting characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder is almost nine males to one female. The male to female ratio for students exhibiting Autism Spectrum Disorder is higher than normally reported in the literature (four male to one female), however it should be noted that only 33 students were identified as exhibiting the characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Grade Level Proportions Across Special Needs Descriptions

Table 17 summarizes the proportion of students in Kindergarten (K4/K5), primary grades, intermediate grades, secondary grades and adult education in the current evaluation.

Table 17
**Grade Level Breakdown by
Special Needs Students**

Grade Levels									
K4/K5		Primary Grades		Intermediate Grades		Secondary Grades		Adult Education	
Num	%	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%
293	17.8%	436	26.5%	467	28.4%	302	18.3%	148	9.0%

Approximately two thirds of the special needs students were in the primary (26.5%) and intermediate grades (27.4%). The remaining one third distributed across K4/K5 (17.8%) and adult education (9%).

Table 18 summarizes the proportion of special needs designates by grade levels across special needs categories.

Table 18
**Special Needs Designations
Across Grade Levels**

Special Needs Designation By Category	Grade Levels									
	K4/K5		Primary Grades		Intermediate Grades		Secondary Grades		Adult Education	
	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%
Communication Disorder	157	47.8%	129	39.3%	27	8.2%	10	3.1%	5	1.5%
Learning Disability	29	5.3%	120	22.0%	222	40.4%	135	24.6%	43	7.8%
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder	31	17.0%	38	20.8%	49	26.9%	27	14.8%	37	20.3%
Intellectual Disability	43	12.6%	80	23.4%	102	30.0%	84	24.6%	32	9.4%
Behavior Disorder Acting Out	55	16.1%	90	26.3%	111	32.4%	60	17.5%	26	7.6%
Behavior Disorder Internalizing	22	11.8%	38	20.3%	50	26.7%	34	18.2%	43	23.0%
Autism Spectrum Disorder	8	24.2%	8	24.2%	9	27.3%	6	18.2%	2	6.1%
Physical Disability	12	21.4%	9	16.1%	18	32.1%	9	16.1%	8	14.3%
Hearing Impairment	14	25.0%	11	19.6%	21	37.5%	4	7.1%	6	10.7%
Visual Impairment	7	23.3%	4	13.3%	10	33.3%	7	23.3%	2	6.7%

87% of the special needs students identified with Communication Disorder were in K4/K5 and primary grades. While the percentage is high this is not surprising given that communication delay and disorders are more often found in young children. As well, the decision rules for the overlap between Communication Disorders and Learning Disabilities tended to increase the number of students identified with Communication Disorders in K4/K5 and early primary grades. While K4/K5 grades represent less than one fifth of the overall special needs population; close to one quarter of the students with low incidence disabilities (Autism Spectrum Disorder, Physical Disability, Hearing and Visual Impairment) were identified in the K4/K5 grades. Hopefully this represents a trend to early identification. It is worth noting that while only 9% of the total special needs population was enrolled in adult education, 20% of the students identified with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and 23% of the students identified with Internalizing Behaviour Disorder were enrolled in adult education programs.

School Size Breakdown Across Special Needs Designations

Table 19 summarizes the proportion of special education students in small schools (fewer than 40 students), medium sized schools (40 to 100 students) and large schools (over 100 students).

Table 19
**School Size Breakdown
 by Special Needs Students**

School Size					
Large		Medium		Small	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
562	34%	672	40%	438	26%

34% of the special population were in large schools, 40% were in medium sized schools and 26% were in small schools.

Table 20 summarizes the proportion of special designation by school size across special needs categories.

Table 20
**Special Needs Designations
 Across School Size**

Special Needs Designation By Category	School Size					
	Large		Medium		Small	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Communication Disorder	102	30%	102	30%	133	40%
Learning Disability	212	39%	242	43%	99	18%
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder	39	21%	96	53%	48	26%
Intellectual Disability	114	33%	133	38%	100	29%
Behavior Disorder Acting Out	120	35%	111	32%	113	33%
Behavior Disorder Internalizing	38	20%	81	43%	69	37%
Autism Spectrum Disorder	6	18%	22	67%	5	15%
Physical Disability	11	20%	21	37%	24	43%
Hearing Impairment	8	14%	23	41%	25	45%
Visual Impairment	7	23%	11	37%	12	40%
Total Special Need Population	562	34%	672	40%	438	26%

The proportion of students with Communication Disorders in small schools (40%) was considerable higher than the overall proportion of students in small schools (26%). As well, the proportion of students with Acting Out Behaviour Disorders (33%) and Internalizing Behaviour Disorder (37%) was also higher in small schools. In addition, the percentage of students with Physical Disabilities (43%), Hearing Impairment (45%) and Visual Impairment (40%) were also higher in small schools. The proportion of students identified with the characteristics of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (53%) and Autism Spectrum Disorder (67%) was higher in middle sized schools. Overall, the school size seems to indicate that small schools have proportionally more students with special needs.

Degree to Which Individual Education Plans Have Been Developed for Students With Special Needs

One of the key purposes of the Special Education Evaluation was to determine the degree to which special needs students were included in programs and/or receiving services from special education initiatives outlined in SEP Workplans. The degree to which Individual Education Plans (IEPs) have been developed for special needs students provides a bridge from demographic information to the degree of support from Special Education Program Workplans.

Table 21 presents the degree to which IEPs have been developed for special needs students.

Table 21
Degree to Which an Individual Education Plans
Has Been Developed

Degree to Which an IEP has been developed					
Completed IEP		Partial IEP		No IEP	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
791	49%	355	22%	469	29%

As can be seen in Table 21, approximately half of the special education students have completed Individual Education Plans.

Table 22 provides the degree to which IEPs have been developed for special needs designations.

Table 22
Individual Education Program Development
Across Special Needs Categories

Special Needs Designation By Category	Degree to which an IEP has been Developed					
	Completed IEP		Partial IEP		No IEP	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Communication Disorder	94	30%	87	28%	131	42%
Learning Disability	322	60%	95	17%	124	23%
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder	82	46%	48	27%	47	27%
Intellectual Disability	193	57%	73	21%	74	22%
Behavior Disorder Acting Out	162	48%	87	26%	86	26%
Behavior Disorder Internalizing	98	54%	39	22%	44	24%
Autism Spectrum Disorder	17	53%	5	16%	10	31%
Physical Disability	42	78%	8	15%	4	7%
Hearing Impairment	33	60%	10	18%	12	22%
Visual Impairment	21	72%	4	14%	4	14%

Students with Physical Disabilities (78%), Hearing Impairment (60%) and Visual Impairment (72%) have the highest percentages of completed IEP. Students with Communication Disorders (30%) have the lowest percentage of completed IEP.

Degree to Which Special Need Students Were Supported by Special Education Workplan Activities

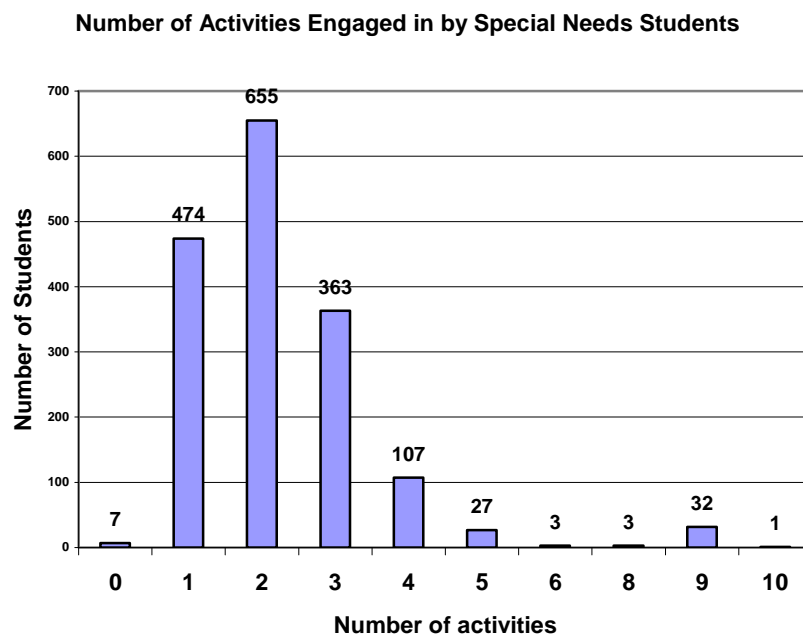
Traditionally special education resources are allocated to schools on the basis of the number of identified special education students enrolled in the school. An alternative approach called the Intervention Based Approach is used to allocate resources to First Nations schools in BC that submit “Special Education Workplans”. Schools are allocated a base amount plus a per student amount based on their nominal roll. This approach to allocation enables schools to develop preventative as well as remedial programs. While the Special Education Workplans provide a clear description of program and activities provided and the number of students involved, they **do not** indicate whether identified special needs students are receiving benefit from these programs. Hence, a key objective of the current evaluation study was to determine the degree to which special needs students were included in programs and/or receiving services from the programs described in the Workplans.

Two measures of the degree of support were collected:

1. The number of Special Education Workplan activities special needs students were engaged in.
2. The degree to which Special Education Workplan activities were developed for specific special needs students across the workplan categories:
 - Student assessment
 - Individual student/ small group programs
 - School wide large group programs
 - Early intervention programs
 - Professional development

Figure 3 shows the number of workplan activities special needs students were engaged in.

Figure 3



As evident in the data, the largest percentage of special needs students, 39% (655 students), were in two workplan activities. 28% (474 students) were included in one workplan activity and 22% (363 students) were included in three workplan activities. A follow up call regarding the seven students not supported by workplan activities indicated that those students were supported by a Resource Teacher funded through band nominal roll funding, rather than through SEP funding. Clearly special needs students are involved in both the programs and activities on the Special Education Workplans.

Table 23 presents both the number of special needs students supported by activities within each of the five program categories, and percentage of special needs students supported within each program category.

Table 23
Number of Special Needs Students
Supported by Activities in
Program Areas

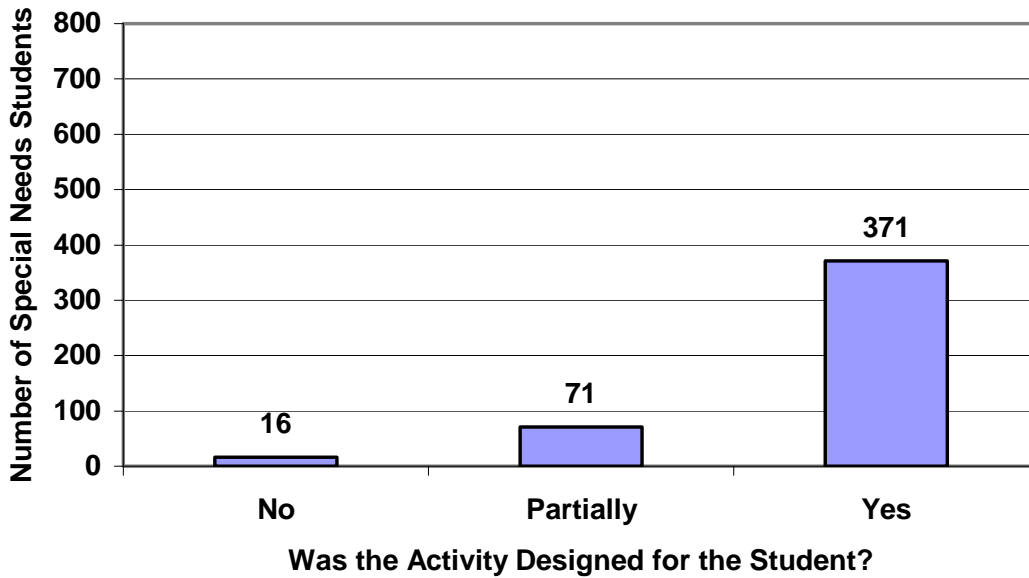
Program Area	Number of Special Needs Students Supported	Percent of Special Needs Students Supported
Student Assessment	458	27%
Individual Student/ Small Group Programs	1201	72%
School-Wide/ Large Group Programs	533	32%
Early Intervention Programs	124	7%
Professional Development	192	11%

72% of the special needs students (1207) were supported by individual student/small group programs. An additional 533 students or 32% of the overall special needs student population was included in Whole school/Large group programs. As well, 458 students or 27% of the special needs student population was included in student assessment activity. The overall number of times special needs students are included in individual small group activities along with their inclusion in other program category activities provides strong evidence that identified special needs are in fact receiving support from SEP funding.

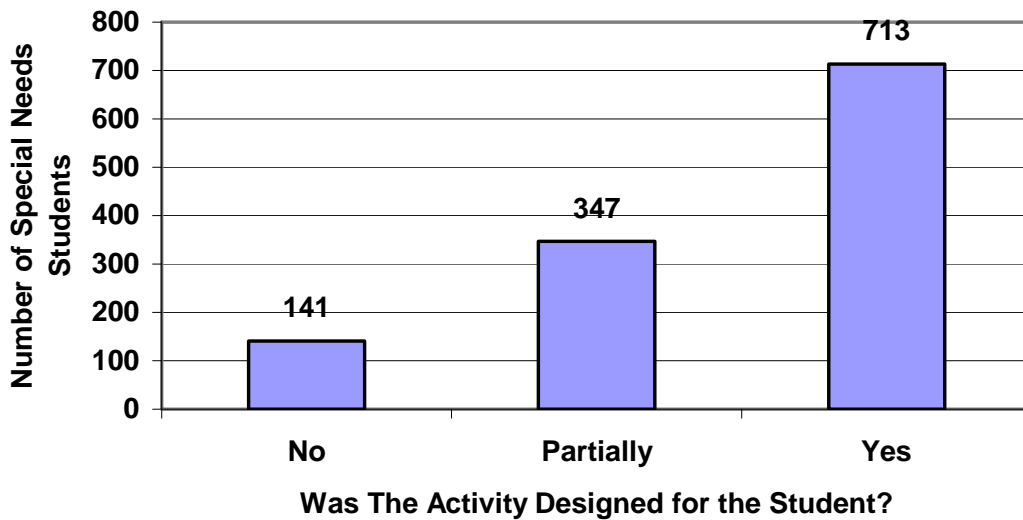
Figure 5 presents the degree to which programs and services were developed for special needs students across program categories.

Figure 5

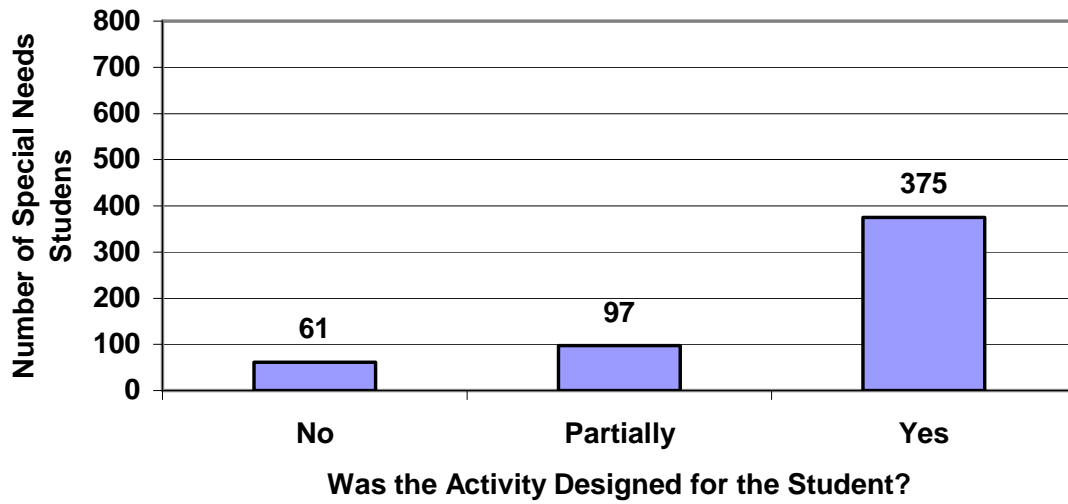
Degree to Which Assessment Activities were Designed for Specific Special Needs Students



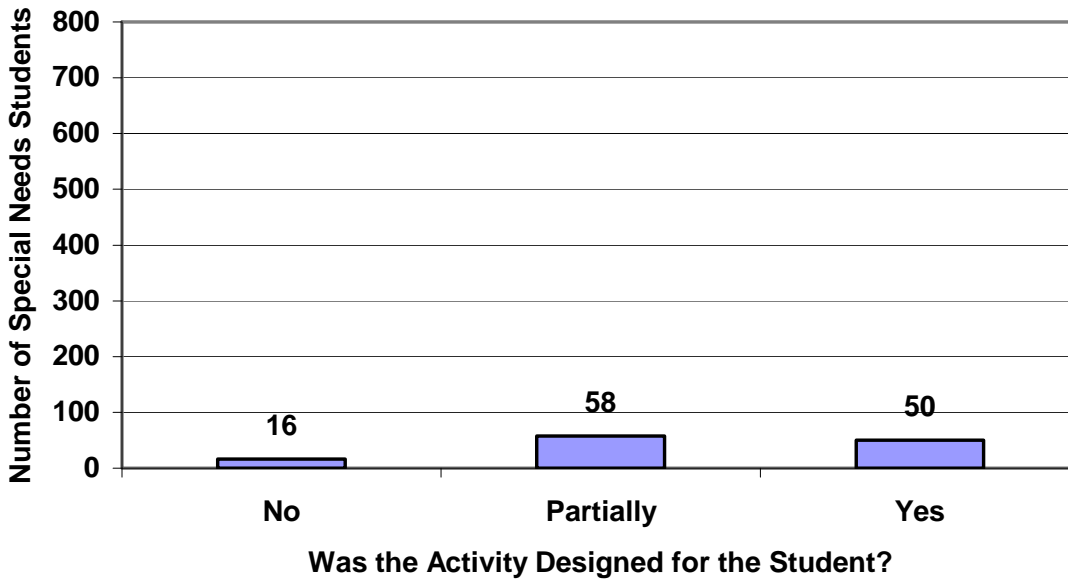
Degree to Which Individual/Small Group Activities were Designed for Specific Special Needs Students



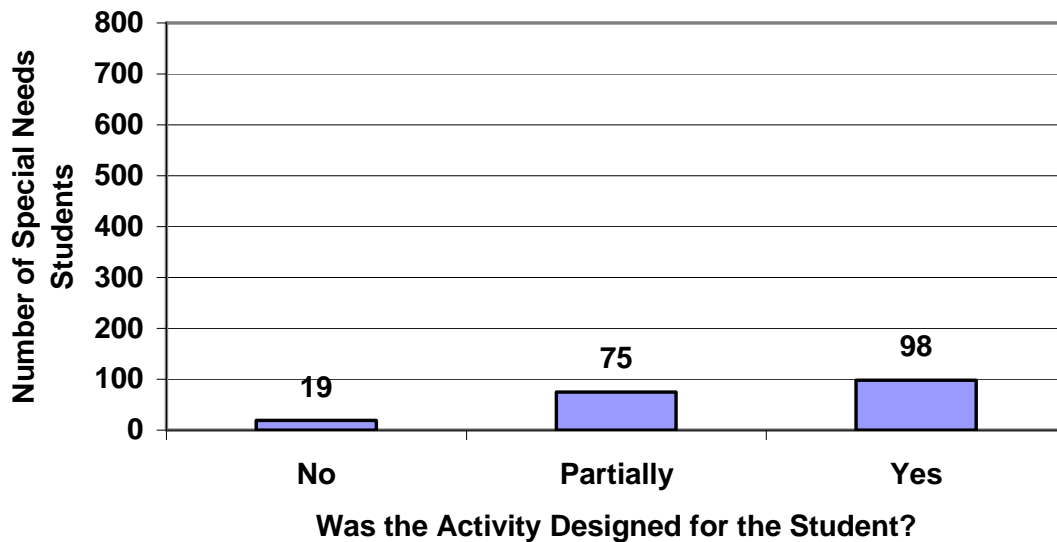
Degree to Which Schoolwide/Large Group Activities were Designed for Specific Special Needs Students



Degree to Which Early Intervention Activities were Designed for Specific Special Needs Students



Degree to Which Professional development Activities were Designed for Specific Special Needs Students



81% of the assessment activities were specifically designed for students with special needs. In addition, 60% of the individual/small group activities were specifically developed for students with special needs students as a focus. It is also worth noting that 51% of the professional development activities were planned to specifically respond to special needs students. Overall, the degree to which program activities were targeted toward students with special needs provides additional evidence that special needs students are in fact receiving support from SEP funding.

Summary

The current evaluation was conducted to meet the following three objectives:

1. To develop preliminary estimates of the number of special needs students by Special Education Category
2. To describe the learning and social/emotional needs found within First Nations Schools
3. To determine the degree to which special needs students were included in programs and/or receiving services from special education initiatives outlined on SEP Workplans.

In order to collect data to address the objectives of the evaluation a survey was sent to **all** First Nations Schools that submitted SEP Workplans for the 2006/07 year (123 schools were sent evaluation forms). 106 schools returned completed evaluations representing a return rate of 86%. Return rates from the 8 regions ranged from 72% to 100%. An overall response rate of 86% with no region below 70% represents a high survey return rate and strongly suggests that the data reported are representative of the overall population of First Nation special needs students.

The survey results indicated that 30% of the First Nations student population has identified **moderate-severe** special needs. This estimate is congruent with the data reported in the 2005/06 Coordinated Student Assessment Final Report. In that report, Dr. More reported that 23% of the population met criteria for inclusion in BC Provincial Special Education Categories and that an additional 372 students were on the wait list for assessment. Overall estimates of the proportion of special needs students, reported in the literature, is approximately 10% to 12% of the overall student population, indicating that the proportion of special needs students in the First Nation Schools is 2 to 3 times greater. In addition 27% of the First Nations special needs students (454 students) had identifiable special needs in more than one category. The Special Education category that most often co-occurred was Behavior Disorders, both Acting Out and Internalizing. In the 2005/06 Coordinated Student Assessment Report Dr. More concluded that there was an “urgent need for professional counselors and therapists (to work with special needs students) including students whose behavior endangers themselves and/or others; or for students who suffer from significant depression.” The data collected in this evaluation supports Dr. More’s conclusion: 9.5% of the overall student population (532 students) was identified as meeting the criteria for Behavior Disorders.

An analysis of the regional breakdown of special needs students indicated that the Haida/Tsimshian/Haisla/Nisga’a region had the overall highest percentage of special needs students (40%). An increased percentage of students with Learning Disabilities and/or Communication Disorders were the major contributing factor for the increased number of reported special needs students in this region. A review of both the numbers and percentages of Low/Incidence High/Cost special needs students indicates that the Tsilhqot’in/Carrier/Sekani region has a complicated population of special needs students.

An analysis of the school size breakdown data indicates that smaller schools tend to a higher proportion of special needs students. This data may be useful in weighting requests for additional funds.

An important objective in the current evaluation study was to determine the degree to which special needs students were included in or receiving services from SEP programs described on school Workplans. To address this question two measures were collected:

1. The number of SEP Workplan activities special needs students were engaged in
2. The degree to which SEP Workplan activities were developed for specific special needs students.

The data indicated that essentially all special needs students (informally identified as well as formally assessed and identified) were included in SEP Workplan activities, which is considered a strong benefit of the use of an Intervention-based model for funding Special Education . Over 70% of the special needs students were supported by two or more Workplan activities. 72% of the special needs (1207 students) were supported by SEP Workplan activities categorized as Individual/Small Group. 60% of those activities were designed with a specific special needs student in mind. However it should be noted that this evaluation did not examine the quality or adequacy of Workplan activities nor the sources and adequacy of funding for Workplan activities. ***Hence while essentially all special needs students are included in Workplan activities , conclusions cannot be drawn about the adequacy of the support nor the adequacy of SEP funding.***

Recommendations

Increasing Early Intervention Programs

Using an “Intervention” approach for the allocation of SEP funding is clearly providing both programming for students with special needs and support for formal assessment. While it is strongly recommended that the “Intervention” approach to the allocation of SEP funds be continued, it is also recommended that additional funding be provided for Early Intervention Programs. The data in the current evaluation indicates that only 7% of the special needs students were involved in Early Intervention programs. There is a clear link between language competence, and in particular phonological ability, and learning to read. Given the proportion of students identified as Communication Disordered (16% of the special needs population) and/or Learning Disabled (26% of the special needs population) it would clearly be prudent to focus on early intervention.

Strengthening Informal Assessment

In the current study 44% of the special needs students were identified through informal assessment. To increase the consistency of informal assessment schools were provided a Special Needs Template describing the key learning and behavioral characteristics of nine Special Education categories. The template acted as a first “gate” in identifying students with special needs. It is recommended that schools be given guidance in the use of appropriate assessment instruments to increase both consistency and rigor of informal assessment. This recommendation is consistent with the informal assessment process described in the 2006/07 INAC National Program Guidelines.

“In keeping with the trend among provincial education systems, funding will support both direct and indirect services using an intervention-based approach. Under this approach, appropriately trained teachers and specialists are able to use and interpret assessments to develop individual educational plans and the necessary intervention to address the student’s immediate need(s) while awaiting formal assessments. This approach gives First Nations the flexibility to employ intervention strategies more quickly”

Annual Data Collection

One of the purposes of the current evaluation was to provide estimates of the special needs population by Special Education category. The number of special needs students by category is an important piece of data in justifying funding for special needs students. It is recommended that FNEESC establish a process for annually collecting and summarizing that information.

Measuring the Quality, Adequacy, and Source of SEP Workplan Activities

The current evaluation investigated the degree to which special needs students were involved in SEP Workplan activities. While the study found that special needs students are supported by SEP Workplan programs, the quality, adequacy, and funding sources of those programs was not investigated. It is recommended that future investigations focus on quality, adequacy, and funding. Quality and adequacy could be probed by linking IEPs to Workplan activities and investigating both IEP outcomes and Workplan activities outcomes. Adequacy of SEP funding and additional sources of funding could be probed by linking section C of the school Workplan (SEP Program Budget) to the demographic information regarding special needs students in the current study.

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References Used in Developing the Matrix of Learning and/or Behavioral Characteristics of Special Needs Students

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- Ministry of Education (2006) Students with Visual Impairment. Victoria, BC. Available Internet: www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/visimpair/
- Psychology Today (2006) Communication Disorders. Available Internet : www.psychologytoday.com/conditionss/commdisorders.html

Documents that Influenced the Development of the Matrix

- Ministry of Health (1983) Policy Manual: Long Term Care Programs. Victoria, BC.
-The Eligibility Criteria Provided a Model of Functional Behavioral Description of Need.
- Finance and Facilities Advisory Committee (1995/1996)
-Subcommittee to Recommend Changes to the Special Education Funding System. Victoria, BC.
-This committee developed an early prototype of the learning and behavioral characteristics of Special needs Students.

Appendix 1
Special Education Evaluation Form
Instructions for Completing the Form

Instructions for Completing the Special Education Program Evaluation Form

(If you require more space, please make photocopies of the form, or download additional forms from www.fnsa.ca)

Resources

To complete this task you need:

1. Access to your teaching staff who can assist in identifying special education needs, and services.
2. A list of the formally assessed/identified special needs students attending your school, and their assessment reports.
3. A list of the other students in your school who have significant special education needs but have not been formally identified as special needs students.
4. IEPs that have been developed for students with special needs.
5. The Special Needs Screening Template.
6. Your Special Education 2006/2007 Workplan.

Instructions

Step 1: For each “Formally Assessed/Identified” special needs student, place their initials on the SEP Evaluation Form. Check (✓) the “Formally Assessed/Identified” columns and indicate their appropriate Sex and Grade Level.

Step 2: Using the Special Needs Screening Template as a guide, check (✓) each column on the Form that closely matches the student learning and behavioural characteristics (The assessment report, IEP, and teacher advice should assist in completing Step 2).

Step 3: Using the Special Needs Screening Template as a guide, review the descriptions in the areas you have checked (for example, if you checked Behaviour Disorder - Acting Out - Moderate, review the characteristics in that area). Place an X in the one or two checked columns that “best match” the student’s learning and behavioural characteristics (a “best match” indicates the most important or salient area of special needs).

Step 4: Place the initials of each student with significant special education needs who have **not** been formally identified on the SEP Evaluation Form. Check (✓) the column that indicates “Not Formally Assessed”. Indicate their appropriate Sex and Grade they are enrolled in.

Step 5: Using the Special Needs Screening Template as a guide, check (✓) each column on the SEP Evaluation Form that closely matches the student’s learning and behavioural characteristics (assessment reports and teacher advice should assist in completing this step).

Step 6: Using the Special Needs Screening Template as a guide, review the descriptions in the area you checked. Place an X in the one or two checked (✓) columns that “best match” the student’s learning and behavioural characteristics (a “best match” indicates the important or salient area of special need).

Step 7: Check (✓) the column that indicates the current status of the student’s IEP.

Step 8: Using your current Special Education 2006/2007 Workplan, indicate the activity #s that describe programs /services that the student is participating in.

Step 9: Check (✓) the column that indicates the degree to which the program was developed to meet the student’s special needs.

Appendix 2

Special Needs Screening Template

Special Needs Screening Template

Description

The Special Needs Screening Template provides a list of the key behavioural and learning characteristics in six broad areas of special needs (Learning Disabilities, Communication Disorders, Behavior Disorders, Intellectual Disabilities, Physical Disabilities and Sensory Impairment in Hearing and Vision). In addition, the Screening Template provides a list of the common behavioural indicators in Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders and Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Purpose

The Special Needs Screening Template can assist school staff in identifying students requiring further assessment. The Template also provides a tool for First Nations Schools (when completing the First Nations School Annual Report) to indicate students “Informally Identified” as students with special needs.

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Persistent Learning Disabilities	Communication Disorders
<p>Students with severe learning disabilities have persistent difficulty in learning and using basic academic skills (i.e. reading, writing, and math).</p> <p>Early Primary <i>Persistent</i> difficulty in recognition of letters and numerals <i>or</i> <i>Persistent</i> difficulty in demonstrating phonological awareness.</p> <p>Late Primary-Intermediate <i>Persistent</i> difficulty in acquisition of reading (poor decoding skills, and limited comprehension), writing (inability to express ideas in writing), and/or numeracy (inaccurate and slow computation).</p> <p>Intermediate-Secondary <i>Persistent</i> difficulty in using reading as a tool to learn new information or using writing to express ideas or using computation to solve problems.</p>	<p>Students with communication disorders have <i>persistent</i> difficulty understanding and using spoken language. Communication disorders occur in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech production • Expressive language (expressing themselves with oral language) • Receptive language (understanding spoken language) <p>Students with Speech Production Problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a <i>noticeable</i> stutter or hesitation in speech <i>or</i> • Have <i>persistent</i> problems articulating sounds in words and will sometimes leave sounds out of words or substitute an incorrect sound. <p>Students with Expressive Language Problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have difficulty finding the correct word to express meaning • <i>Often</i> experience difficulty in expressing complex ideas <i>or</i> • <i>May</i> use limited vocabulary and incorrect grammar to express idea <p>Students with Receptive Language Problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have difficulty carrying out multi-step directions • Learning new vocabulary, and remembering sequences of numbers (e.g. phone numbers)
Behaviour Disorders	Autism Spectrum
<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Moderate</i>
<p>Students with Acting Out Behaviour Disorders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Frequently</i> disrupt classroom activities, routines <i>and</i> • <i>Often</i> loose their tempers and argue with adults and/or threaten peers <i>or</i> • Are <i>sometimes</i> physically aggressive with adults <i>and</i> often fight with peer and • <i>Often</i> defy or refuse to follow directions given by adults in authority <p>Students with Internalizing Behaviour Disorders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often appear depressed <i>and</i> • Show little interest (or enjoyment of) pleasurable activities <i>and</i> • <i>Often</i> feel worthless and say that they wish they were never born <i>or</i> • <i>May</i> appear tense and have difficulty controlling worries and fears 	<p>Students Diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience difficulty with reciprocal social interaction (appear unaware of other feelings, tend not to seek social interaction) • Both receptive language and/or expressive communication are delayed (have difficulty in engaging in socially appropriate conversation) • <i>Often</i> get upset over small changes in routine • <i>Frequently</i> exhibit restricted, repetitious patterns of interest and/or behaviour • <i>May</i> have unusual reactions or lack of reactions to sensory stimuli
<i>Severe</i>	<i>Severe</i>
<p>Students with Severe Acting Out Behaviour Disorders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are extremely disruptive in most environments (School/Home/Community) • Are often involved in delinquent behaviour (stealing, aggression, fire setting etc.) • May present a threat to others safety (they may be physically or sexually assaultive) <p>Students with Serious Internalizing Behaviour Disorders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appear vulnerable and fragile and at risk in the classroom • Often are profoundly withdrawn and isolated • May have attempted suicide or are at risk of suicide 	<p>Students with more serious conditions within the Autism Spectrum Disorder:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience <i>considerable</i> difficulty in developing functional communication (they <i>may</i> need to use simple gestural sign language and/or a communication board) • Often exhibit repetitive behaviours (finger flapping, rocking, or slapping themselves) • <i>Often</i> have serious difficulty establishing social relationships (difficulty to comfort, or they appear socially isolated)

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Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder	Intellectual Disability	
<p>Students diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder often have difficulty with both learning and social interaction.</p> <p>Learning Problems Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty understanding "abstract concepts" (example: such a sugar is concrete but sweet is abstract, and money is concrete but value is abstract.) • Difficulty generalizing • Difficulty with sequential thinking • Difficulty remembering concepts and facts from one day to the next <p>Behavioural Problems include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty predicting and/or understanding the consequences of their behaviour • Difficulty perceiving 'social cues' hence, alienating peers • Easily over-stimulated and/or overwhelmed, often leading to outbursts. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Moderate</i></p> <p>Students with Intellectual Disability require <i>planned instruction</i> to learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self care skills • Appropriate social skills • Effective communication • Functional academic skills <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Severe</p> <p>Students with significant Intellectual Disability require <i>ongoing assistance for</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal care • Communicating needs and wants • Participating in daily living activities <p>Note: Building modifications are often required for personal care needs (e.g. toileting).</p>	
Physical Disability	Hearing Impairment	Vision Impairment
<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Moderate</i>
<p>Students with Physical Disability require <i>periodic assistance with</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobility or self-care skills (e.g. toileting) • May require augmentative device for communication • Academic tasks <i>often require adaptations</i> to enable the student to meet learning outcomes <p>Students with chronic medical conditions (e.g. cancer, chronic fatigue syndrome etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - often miss school - experience reduced endurance 	<p>Students with Hearing Impairment <i>require</i> the use of hearing aids. They may also require a personal f.m. system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Often</i> experience <i>considerable</i> difficulty following classroom discussion when background noise is present. • Hearing loss <i>often</i> effects the following areas of language development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - vocabulary development - understanding abstract ideas - understanding idiomatic language <p>Hearing loss <i>may</i> lead to social isolation</p>	<p>Students with Visual Impairment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require closer than normal seating to see the information on wall maps, black boards, overheads etc. • Require adapted materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - enlarged print - enhanced contrast - and/or specialized equipment to gain information from books and other print materials • They <i>may</i> need orientation or assistance in finding their way in new environments • Visual impairment <i>may</i> result in social isolation
<i>Severe</i>	<i>Severe</i>	<i>Severe</i>
<p>Students who are physically dependent require <i>ongoing support for</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All activities of daily living (i.e. toileting, eating, dressing, and mobility) • <i>Often</i> require augmentative device for communication <p>Note: Building modifications are often required for physically handicapped to fully participate.</p>	<p>Students who are Deaf or profoundly Hearing Impaired require <i>both</i> hearing aids and specialized auditory and speech training to develop functional communication</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>or</i></p> <p>They may rely on sign language to communicate</p>	<p>Students who are Blind and/or severely Visually Impaired:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require Brail or taped versions of printed material • Require orientation and mobility training to independently find their way in <i>familiar</i> environments • <i>Often</i> require assistance with personal care (e.g. dressing)
<p>A student with deaf/blindness has a degree of visual and auditory impairment that results in <i>significant</i> difficulties in developing communicative, educational, vocational and social skills.</p>		

Appendix 3

Special Education Evaluation Form

