Program Review
Exeter Township School District
Special Education and Gifted Programs

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Introduction

At the request of Superintendent Dr. Beverly Martin and Assistant Superintendent Dr. Warren Mata, we were asked to conduct a review of the Exeter Township School District special education and gifted programs. The aim of a program review is to gather information that can be used to determine the degree to which a program meets its intended purposes, and as important, information that can be used for making eventual improvements to the program. With program review, the emphasis is on the word “program” and our singular focus was to examine program features or those overarching elements that bind the work of various individuals together for the purpose of achieving the goal of providing effective and efficient special education and gifted services. As such we were not necessarily interested in the work of specific individuals within the organization; instead our interest was on the roles individuals play within the organization and how those roles contribute to the special education and gifted programs’ ability to deliver effective education services.

When conducting program reviews, reviewers make conscious decisions about which aspects of the program are important to examine and the best ways to collect information. Our effort was guided largely by our initial discussions with the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent wherein broad target areas were identified for further scrutiny. Specifically, those target areas included (a) identification of the strengths associated with the Exeter Township School District special education and gifted programs, (b) the degree to which the Exeter Township School District special education and gifted programs meet their stated mission and goals, (c) the capacity of the programs to meet the needs of a burgeoning group of special education and gifted students and their parents, and (d) the quality of the working relationship between general education and special education within the district.

Reviewers also bring with them certain assumptions that guide the program review process and it is incumbent upon them and indeed prudent for them to declare those assumptions at the outset so that readers of the final report understand the values and standards against which evaluative judgments are being made. As program reviewers, we were guided by the following beliefs and assumptions.

First, we believe the requirements incorporated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA-04) and Pennsylvania School Code supply objective criteria for the implementation of special education and gifted services around which everyone can readily agree; and that when a district decides to identify a child as a child in need of specialized instruction, it tacitly agrees to do so in accordance with the provisions of the law. It is the requirements of law that provide the foundation from which a district operates.

Second and in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Pennsylvania School Code, special education is a process whereby students are identified, screened, evaluated, and placed, so that they may receive specially designed instruction in the least restrictive environment at no cost to the parents. The centerpiece of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is the Individualized Education Program (IEP).
The IEP describes exactly how school districts promise to provide a free appropriate public education for every eligible child. We agree with Bateman and Linden (2006), two nationally recognized experts on the IEP process who remind us that developing appropriate IEPs is serious business because a great deal is at stake not only for the child but also for school officials. The process of convening an IEP meeting—inviting participants, collecting performance data, drafting the preliminary document, and gathering the appropriate participants in a convenient meeting place is a hugely time-consuming and in itself an expensive endeavor. Then, when the logistics of the meeting are over, school officials must take steps to ensure that the IEP is implemented in such a way as to ensure fulfillment of the promises made to the parents at that meeting. Districts that spend time and effort in activities designed to improve the technical adequacy of the IEP document as well as the process of IEP implementation help ensure the provision of meaningful services for its eligible children and youth and work to avoid costly penalties associated with legally inappropriate and indefensible documents.

Third, we believe that the tensions inherent in school districts’ attempts to implement the federal mandates of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act are real but not insurmountable. In apparent contradiction with one another, these two pieces of legislation burden teachers to at once propel students to greater achievement heights than ever before through the use of a standards-aligned educational curriculum and at the same time provide individualized instruction with accommodations and supports for students with disabilities in the least restrictive setting. The pressure on school officials is compounded in light of the demands of the recent Gaskin Agreement that asks districts to serve greater numbers of students with unique needs in the very settings where the standardized curriculum is emphasized—the general education classroom. We believe that the demands of NCLB and IDEA-04 can be met by the development of structures that allow special and general educators to work more closely together on behalf of all students.

Our fourth and final assumption is that schools are human organizations and that relationships are of critical importance to the quality of the work that is accomplished within them. Consequently, our evaluation examined the provision of special education and gifted services from the perspectives of the people throughout the Exeter Township School District who are actively involved with the implementation of those services. Audiences we targeted for inclusion in the program review were special education teachers, gifted teachers, general education teachers, principals, central office personnel, school psychologists, guidance counselors, instructional aides, speech and language therapists, as well as parents. Nearly all of the participants were eager to share with us information that might serve to move the program forward in the future. These are the people who “make it happen” on a daily basis; the ones who enjoy the efficiencies of the delivery system and the ones who struggle with its inefficiencies as well. Collectively, these are the people who know where future improvements need to be made.

Throughout our interviews and discussions we had the pleasure of meeting with over 100 people from the Exeter Township School District. We heard about the perceived strengths, weaknesses and challenges facing the district from the very people who are
involved with the programs on a daily basis, and from our perspective, the Exeter Township School District has much to be proud about in its delivery of specialized services. As within all organizations, however, there are some challenges. It is fair to say that at least some of the challenges facing the special education and gifted programs in the Exeter Township School District are presently shared by educators in many other districts across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the nation as a whole. Some perhaps are unique.

As a reader, it is important to keep in mind that the goal of the program review is program improvement. Throughout our work in the Exeter Township School District we emphasized the importance of gathering valid and reliable information that could be used by district officials to improve the functioning of the special education and gifted programs in the days and years to come. It is in that spirit that we offer this report.

Organization of the Narrative

The narrative below describes the results of our examination of Exeter Township School District special education and gifted programs. The report is organized according to the guiding questions as well as the major themes that emerged from our data analysis. For this report, themes are defined as comments in response to our questions, either positive or negative, that were mentioned by multiple individuals during the course of the interviews. In most cases, the emergent themes were supported across groups (for example, special education teachers, instructional aides, and principals) and thus we were able to achieve a triangulation of perspectives, adding strength to an overall theme through wider affirmation and consensus for the particular observation. At times, we extract and report specific quotes from the hundreds we acquired during our interviews and include them in this report, but only when we feel they are representative of a larger theme that emerged from the data.

Scope of the Program Review

In an attempt to gain an accurate portrayal of the special education and gifted programs, we interviewed 90 employees and 16 parents representing 12 families of the Exeter Township School District. Specifically, we interviewed 30 special education teachers, 18 general education teachers, 5 gifted teachers, 5 school psychologists, 6 guidance counselors, 6 principals, 5 assistant principals, 5 special education central office personnel, 7 special education aides, 2 speech and language therapists, the Director of Human Resources, and conducted focus groups with parents of 12 families. Interviews included persons from the three elementary schools, Reiffton School, the Exeter Township Junior High School, as well as the Exeter Township Senior High School.

Selection and Description of Participants

Special education teachers and instructional aides within the Exeter Township School District were selected randomly by our team from a list of all possible employees within the respective category of employment that was provided to us by the Exeter
Township School District administration. Each name on the list was assigned a number. Participants were selected using a computer-generated table of random numbers. Once names were identified by the reviewers, district administrators notified the employees through building principals of their involvement.

The sample of general education teachers and parents was selected randomly by administrators from the Exeter Township School District using the same methodology described above. Random selection afforded us a rich cross-section of subjects, ranging from individuals who were new in their professional experience to veteran teachers who had over 33 years of teaching under their belts.

Although random selection was part of our procedures, we welcomed others who wished to speak with us to do so, and labeled this group of interested participants as “volunteers.” In some cases, an entire group was targeted for inclusion in the program review due to its low numbers and central importance to the provision of special education and gifted services. Subsequently, all principals, assistant principals, school psychologists, gifted teachers, counselors and key central office administrators and staff were targeted for inclusion in the effort.

In addition to school-based faculty and staff, parents of students receiving special education were also included in the review. Parent participants were selected randomly by Exeter Township School District administrators. From the pool of all Exeter Township School District families, 137 parents were invited to participate in a focus group format. Of the 137 families invited, 8 families participated in a focus group that was held during the day at the Central Administrative Office Building on November 3, 2010. A second mailing to another 50 randomly selected parents was conducted. Four families participated in a focus group scheduled for the evening of November 16, 2010 at the Central Administrative Office Building.

The information parents provided was a meaningful addition to the information we collected and contributed to the mosaic of responses we heard about the social importance and degree of community acceptance of the special education and gifted programs. Given the small number of parents who actually participated in the focus groups, generalizations from their responses to the larger group of Exeter parents are unwarranted and the responses from the focus groups sessions should not be construed as representative of the feelings of parents of the Exeter Township School District.

Participation in the program review was voluntary; however, participants were encouraged to cooperate and supply information that could be used for making eventual improvements to the special education and gifted programs. Finally, participants were assured of anonymity.
Instrumentation

The program review of the Exeter Township School District special education and gifted services included a series of interviews. To enhance consistency of data collection, interviews were guided by a semi-structured interview process, meaning that we used a standard set of questions with similarly situated individuals as a method of initiating conversations and gaining their perspectives about the provision of special education and gifted services.

Questions included in the interviews were generated by the review team and derived from a bank of questions used by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania *Compliance Monitoring for Continuous Improvement Process* (2010) and *Designing and Evaluating Quality Programs for Seriously Emotionally Disturbed Students: A Guide for Administrators* (1987). The questions were designed to provide information on the social significance of program goals, the acceptability of the procedures employed to achieve those goals, and the social importance of the effects of the program goals and procedures that are in place. Additional probing questions were asked as issues, either positive or negative, arose during the discussions. We have included the questions asked of the various groups in Appendix A.

In addition to interviews and parent focus groups, we conducted walk-through observations of 30 classrooms using a structured format within the three elementary schools, Reiffton School, Exeter Township Junior High School and Exeter Township Senior High School. We have included the structured format for walk-throughs in Appendix B. We also examined printed program material about the Exeter Township School District special education and gifted programs including, the *Exeter Township School District Special Education Procedure Manual*, the *Exeter Township School District Directory of Special Education Services*, the district’s webpage, *Exeter Township School District Special Education Plan*, and *The Special Education Report Exeter Township SD* (2008) published by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Finally, we examined 27 Individualized Education Programs, with names of students redacted, from a cross-section of all school levels, viz., 11 elementary, 7 secondary, and 9 GIEPs.

Findings

Findings are organized around the broad questions that guided the program review as well as the prominent themes that emerged from our data analyses. These we list below:

1. What are the strengths associated with the Exeter Township School District special education and gifted programs?

2. Does the Exeter Township School District special education program meet its mission and goals for the provision of special education services to students and families?
3. Does the Exeter Township School District gifted program meet its mission and goals for the provision of gifted services to students and families?

4. Does the Exeter Township School District have the capacity to meet the needs of a burgeoning group of special education and gifted students and their parents?

5. What is the nature and quality of the working relationships between general education and special education within the district?

### What are the strengths associated with the Exeter Township School District special education and gifted programs?

When we asked participants to point to strengths of the programs, we heard over and over again about energetic, enthusiastic, knowledgeable, child-centered special education and gifted teachers who work hard on behalf of the district’s students—a theme voiced by every group we had the pleasure to speak with during the course of our review, including the parents. We also heard from just about every employee how much they like their jobs as well as the people with whom they work. These sentiments truly impressed us.

#### 1.1 Finding on Noteworthy Strengths

- Principals, supervisors, colleagues, as well as parents, recognize special education and gifted teachers for the quality of their work with children and youth.

- Most special education teachers report having “good to strong” support from building principals.

- Principals and school psychologists throughout the district report good working relationships, as well as strong support from the Office of Special Education Services.

- Principals characterize parent support of the special education and gifted programs to be quite strong.

- Most (87.5%) special education teachers are quite satisfied with their jobs.

- Special education teachers at Reiffton School, Exeter Township Junior High and Exeter Township Senior High School report adequate planning time for preparing curriculum and completing paperwork, with the exception of progress monitoring.

- Special education classrooms are organized, bright and cheerful as evidenced by our walk-through observations.
• A wide variety of research validated reading and math curricula are employed for instruction.

• Special education teachers use rich assessment data in the development of the present levels of performance for students’ IEPs and for monitoring student progress throughout the year.

• Materials and supplies for special educators and gifted teachers are adequate, if not abundant.

• Positive working relationships exist between special education teachers and the instructional aides assigned to their classrooms.

• Instructional aides report high levels of satisfaction with their jobs.

• Nearly all interviewees report enjoyment in their work and satisfaction in their association with the Exeter Township School District.

• The Transition Program at the Exeter Township Senior High School receives high praise.

2. Does the Exeter Township School District special education program meet its mission and goals for the provision of special education services for students and families?

The mission and goals of the Exeter Township School District special education program as described on the district’s webpage (http://www.exeter.k12.pa.us) and in the Exeter Township School District Directory of Special Education Services is “to provide a continuum of services that offers students with disabilities the opportunity to access the district’s general curriculum within the least restrictive environment. To be eligible, a “student must be evaluated and identified as a student with a disability.”

2.1 Finding on the Mission and Goals of the Special Education Program: Based upon our examination we conclude that the Exeter Township School District special education program performs in accordance with its stated mission and goals. Our examination shows that the Exeter Township School District provides a continuum of services with varying types and levels of support within the district. District services are supplemented by out-of-district placements for those relatively few (3.1%, Special Education Data Report, 2010) students who require more intensive and specialized services than the district has the capacity to provide.

2.2 Finding on Classroom Space and Instructional Delivery: The instructional classroom spaces for serving children are well-resourced, bright, and cheerful, and our observations reveal that overall student engagement was consistently high, expectations clearly defined, and routines followed with fidelity. We observed
multiple instances of explicit instruction coupled with the lavish use of positive reinforcement. Students appeared comfortable with their teachers and content in their surroundings.

2.3 Finding on Teacher Satisfaction: Most (87.5%) of the special education teachers we interviewed express high levels of satisfaction with their work conditions and cite support from principals, counselors, school psychologists, and instructional aides as factors that contribute to their overall job satisfaction. Other factors associated with teacher satisfaction are manageable caseloads, adequate planning time, ample professional development opportunities and abundant supplies and materials.

Dissatisfied special education teachers identify “overwhelming” paperwork (e.g., progress monitoring and IEP development) as the primary factor that contributes to job dissatisfaction. They also express the need for greater administrative support and a better understanding of their roles by others as factors associated with job satisfaction.

2.4 Finding on Paperwork Demands: Special education teachers report burdensome paperwork demands associated with their jobs that include progress monitoring, functional behavioral assessments, and IEP development, as well as the planning and preparation necessary for individualizing subject matter content for various learners. Special education teachers report it takes between 2 and 15 hours to complete one IEP, although the majority of teachers report it takes them between 2 to 5 hours per document. When testing and functional behavior assessments are required, most teachers estimate it takes 6 or more hours to complete tasks associated with the IEP.

3. Does the Exeter Township School District gifted program meet its mission and goals for the provision of gifted services to students and families?

3.1 Finding on Gifted Program: A brief description of the Exeter Township School District gifted education program is displayed on the Exeter Township School District webpage. It states that children and youth are “identified individually based on the guidelines and regulations embodied in state law under Chapter 16” and once identified, students are “provided a program of specially designed instruction”. Our findings show that the Exeter Township School District meets its stated goal of identifying eligible gifted students and provides them with gifted individualized education programs (GIEPs) and based on our analyses, those GIEPs align well with State regulations and include the components of well-developed GIEPs.

3.2 Finding on Concerns with Gifted Program: Our findings further reveal a number of programmatic concerns associated with the gifted program. These concerns include a need for a more explicit mission statement and direction for the gifted program, disagreement over eligibility criteria, large caseloads, increasing enrollments, lack of
exit criteria, and a need for improved communication between the Office of Special Education Services and gifted teachers.

3.2a. Finding on Individualization of Gifted Services: Although GIEPs contained well-constructed individualized goals for gifted students there is the perception among some general education teachers as well as building administrators across the district that the curriculum for gifted students needs to be better aligned with the general education curriculum.

3.2b. Finding on the Quality of Gifted Teachers: When asked to list the strengths of the gifted program, respondents consistently point to gifted teachers’ enthusiasm and competence. Building administrators in particular praise the efforts of the gifted teachers yet acknowledge the aforementioned concerns associated with the gifted program. As one principal shared, “We have the right teachers, just not a clear focus for their work”, a statement that summarizes our team’s conclusions quite well.

4. Does the infrastructure employed by the Exeter Township School District have the capacity to deliver quality services to the increasing number of special education and gifted students and their parents?

We define the term “infrastructure” as the over-arching organizational framework that serves to foster program norms and values, the assignment of personnel and the distribution of workloads necessary to accomplish the important tasks that need attention. Well-designed and well-functioning infrastructures facilitate efficient and effective communication, planning, and response. Districts develop varying structures for the provision of special education and gifted services. We determined that the infrastructure used by the Exeter Township School District includes the work of certain key groups working in collaboration with one another to supply special education and gifted services to the students and parents of the Exeter Township School District. These key groups include members of the Office of Special Education Services, school psychologists, building administrators, special education teachers, gifted teachers, general education teachers, and instructional aides.

4.1 Finding on the Joint-Supervision Model: Based on our analyses, we conclude that improvements are needed in the joint supervision model.

Exeter Township School District employs a joint supervision model for its special education teachers. Principals are primarily responsible for the oversight and evaluation of special education teachers and represent the first line of assistance for day-to-day problems that may emerge. The Office of Special Education Services supplies the second source of supervision in the joint-supervision model and typically limits supervisory purview to situations when problems arise. Otherwise, the Office of Special Education Services directly supervises school psychologists, gifted teachers, and instructional aides.
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Principals indicate that it takes extraordinary coordination and cooperation with the Office of Special Education Services to operate the joint supervision model effectively, which they report had been problematic in the past, but has improved within the past year or two; and although principals are positive about their working relationships with the Office of Special Education Services, many cite a desire for clearer role descriptions and delineation of the duties and concomitant authority associated with the special education portion of their jobs. For example, in the case of students with emotional disturbance who violate the disciplinary code of conduct, what disciplinary options are available to principals in their efforts to support special education teachers? As one principal stated, “Unclear role boundaries between building administrators and the Supervisor of Special Education Services result in unnecessary conflicts.” Better and more frequent communication between principals and the Office of Special Education Services is cited as an area of ongoing need by principals, special education teachers who say “they are caught in the middle”, as well as the Supervisor of Special Education Services.

Implementation of the new initiative on progress monitoring is a prime example of the confusion sometimes caused by the joint supervision model. The dissatisfaction surrounding the initiative appears to be an artifact of how the initiative was developed and introduced to the special education teaching staff and building administrations and not on the value or content of the initiative itself.

Moreover, over one-fifth of the special teachers we interviewed are unsure about who actually supervises their work: the principal or the Supervisor of Special Education Services. Yet most special education teachers (87.5%) characterize the support received from building administrators under the joint supervision model as very strong.

An additional concern associated with the joint-supervision model is the amount of background knowledge about special education that building administrators bring to the role.

A final concern shared with us about the joint supervision model is the perception that the Office of Special Education Services is overburdened by the sheer volume of issues it deals with on a daily basis. Our findings reveal the following responsibilities fall within the purview of the Office of Special Education Services: (a) oversight of IEP development and implementation, (b) administration of Pennsylvania Alternative System of Assessment (PASA), (c) budget, (d) maintenance of educational records, (e) preparations for the state audits, (f) contacts and meetings with Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), (g) supervision of the itinerant consultant, school psychologists, gifted teachers, and instructional aides, (h) monthly building-level meetings, (i) quarterly meetings of gifted teachers, (j) homebound placements, (k) teacher induction, (l) staff development, (m) external placements, (n) progress monitoring, (o) ACCESS billing, (p) PIMS data entry and management, and (q) dispute resolution. The list is not exhaustive. Some of those we interviewed point to “an overwhelmed” Office of Special Education Services as an explanation for quality of communication emanating from that office.
Teacher ratings of support from the Supervisor of Special Education Services are variable, ranging from little to strong support. Although some teachers report responsiveness from the Supervisor of Special Education Services, the majority of them state that there is a need for more frequent and timely communication from the Office of Special Education Services.

The perception of an overburdened Office of Special Education Services is not widely shared among respondents, however. Nevertheless, our team has concluded that the infrastructure for supporting special education and gifted services is nearing its capacity.

4.2 Finding on Infrastructure: Based on our review, we conclude that the present infrastructure suffices to meet the needs of the district but that certain obligations receive less attention than warranted, and further conclude that continued rapid growth in the numbers of eligible special education and gifted children will diminish the quality of future services.

Presently, the Exeter Township School District serves 789 eligible special education students and another 322 students classified as gifted students (Personal Communication with the Assistant Superintendent, November 25, 2010). Together, students who require an “individualized” education comprise over 20% of the district’s enrollment, a figure that exceeds the State average. That means that Exeter personnel must conduct, at a minimum, 1,111 Individualized Education Program meetings within the 180-day school year, or 6.17 IEP and GIEP meetings every day of the school year. As the number of eligible students continues to increase, we predict that the capacity of the district to maintain quality services will likely decrease without future expansion or realignment of its infrastructure.

As part of our analyses on infrastructure, we examined some of the major duties that the Exeter Township School District encumbers in the provision of special education and gifted services. Our assumption was that if these activities were conducted effectively, we could judge the infrastructure as sufficient. These activities include (a) Child Find (i.e., procedures to ensure that all children with disabilities residing in the district are identified, located and evaluated), (b) the referral and identification of students with disabilities, (c) development of Individualized Education Programs and (d) the implementation of the students IEPs.

4.3 Finding on Child Find: Based on the information we reviewed, we conclude that the Exeter Township School District conducts Child Find activities in accordance with state guidelines. Advertisements are posted widely and parents are made aware that special education and gifted services are available through the Exeter Township School District for the children who qualify as in need of special education and gifted services. Parents report that once their child has been identified as eligible for special education services, it would be helpful for school district personnel to describe the types and breadth of services available within the district.
4.4 Finding on the Referral and Identification of Special Education Students: Exeter Township School District has a process in place for screening and identification of students suspected of having disabilities. Currently, five school psychologists are deployed to assess students who are referred for services and help discern whether or not they meet the criteria for eligible students. School psychologists report that their primary role is to conduct assessments for the purpose of identification for special education services. The process of identification was described as being “slow” by a number of people, including the Supervisor of Special Education Services.

Another concern associated with the referral and identification process is how the process actually unfolds within the district. Respondents report that a better core curriculum in general education along with more meaningful, data-based pre-referral interventions may suppress the present rate of referral experienced within the district. Presently, the district is experimenting with Response to Intervention and Instruction (RtII) an initiative that may address the concerns associated with the referral and identification process.

Based on these concerns, we conclude that improvement in the process of identification is warranted.

4.5 Finding on the Development of Individualized Education Programs: Based on our analysis, we conclude that the process of IEP development and implementation is an area in need of improvement. Our findings reveal the following areas in need of improvement:

- Local Education Agency (LEA) attendance at the IEP meetings
- General education teachers’ involvement in IEP development
- A systematic approach for insuring the technical adequacy of the written document

4.5a Finding on LEA Attendance: Local Education Agency attendance at IEP meetings is sometimes inconsistent and a source of concern among some teachers and parents.

LEA refers to a representative of the district who is qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of, specially designed instruction…and who is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the school district. Principals and assistant principals indicate to us that they are usually expected to serve as the LEA at “routine” IEP meetings conducted in their buildings and that they attend at least some (or most, depending on the principal or assistant principal interviewed) of them, even if only long enough to greet the parents. For those IEPs considered not “routine”, the Supervisor or Assistant Supervisor of Special Education steps in and serves as the LEA representative.
Although aware of their attendance obligations in this regard, principals and assistant principals acknowledge they are often prevented from attending meetings by the exigencies associated with building administration. When principals are unable to attend, the assistant principal takes over, and when the assistant principal is unable to attend, a guidance counselor or school psychologist may serve as the LEA. If a guidance counselor or school psychologist is unable to serve as an LEA, a call is made to the Office of Special Education Services. Sometimes the duty of an LEA representative is delegated to special education teachers; many of whom are comfortable in that role, but others clearly not. A few special education teachers express feelings of resentment when administrators cancel at the last minute because they feel unskilled or uncomfortable performing the duties of LEA. Even though administrator attendance at IEP meetings is inconsistent, teachers and principals report that parents seldom point to the absence of an administrator at an IEP meeting as an issue. However, when we asked our small (and unrepresentative) sample of parents about administrator attendance at the IEP meeting, 50% characterize the absence of an administrator as a problem.

Building administrators report that parents of children with disabilities as well as parents of gifted students are highly supportive of the special education and gifted programs.

As a separate issue, none of the principals or special education teachers we interviewed could point to any training they received on how to serve as an LEA representative.

4.5b Finding on General Education Teachers’ Involvement in IEPs: From our interviews, many general education teachers perceive their attendance at IEPs as a fulfillment of an obligation rather than an opportunity for meaningful and cooperative planning. Although there certainly were exceptions, there seems to be a need for more collaboration among special and general educators for developing the content of the IEP, a need mentioned across all levels of schooling. Typically, special education teachers serving as case managers produce draft copies of the IEP document with limited input from general educators. Special educators indicate that most general education teachers routinely attend part, if not all of the IEP meeting.

General educators report that it would be helpful to have more input into the development of IEPs, particularly with regard to the Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) they are called upon to implement in their classrooms. General educators report that the SDI listed in the IEP is sometimes difficult for them to implement in the general education environment. For example, preferential seating is often listed as an accommodation for students in the general education environment, yet sometimes there are too many students in one class with that accommodation to fulfill the request for every student. A second example provided by a general education teacher dealt with test modifications. She said that for one subject, she had to construct three different multiple choice tests for one testing session in order
to meet the range of accommodations for test modifications listed in students’ IEPs. Most general educators do not seem to be aware that as members of the IEP team they have a say in the necessity or appropriateness of a child’s Specially Designed Instruction.

4.5c Finding on the Technical Adequacy of IEPs: Based on our review, we conclude there is a need for more ongoing feedback to teachers on the quality of the IEPs.

A consistent finding among special education teachers is the dearth of feedback on the IEP document itself. When feedback is given, it is most often after a problem has occurred.

According to interviewees, professional development on how to write technically sound IEPs is available, but infrequent. New teachers receive small group instruction on IEP development from the Itinerant Consultant Teacher. The issue of additional formal training on IEPs was an important one for some teachers.

The primary source of routine corrective feedback for most teachers at the present time comes from the Office of Special Education Services when the computerized IEP is finalized, a process that addresses many, but certainly not all, of the clerical errors and or omissions in the IEPs. For example, parents from six of the 12 families in our focus groups indicate that their child’s IEP, at one time or another, had their child’s name incorrect or that pronoun usage was incorrect, using “she” for a male student’s IEP.

5. What is the nature and quality of the working relationships between general education and special education within the district?

5.1 Finding on the Relationship between General and Special Education: Our findings reveal a number of themes associated with the relationship between special and general education that warrant future attention.

5.1a Finding on Communication Between General and Special Education: When special educators were asked, "What do you like most about your job in Exeter Township School District?" most of them expressed the joy of interacting with students and the positive relationships they share with their colleagues, including building administrators. Nonetheless, most of the special educators we interviewed indicate they have little time for collaboration with their general education colleagues in the coordination and delivery of instruction, and that other than teacher-initiated, informal episodes in the hallways before and after school, there are few structures in place to support more meaningful collaboration. Email messages supply the primary method of communication between the two groups.

5.1b Finding on Pull-Out Services: Our results show that special education services are for the most part delivered under a pull-out model of service delivery, with the
Exeter Township Senior High School (Grades 9 and 10 math and reading classes) is the clear exception. Although the pull-out model provides special education teachers the opportunity to use more intensive and individualized instruction with students, students who are pulled-out for instruction and progress monitoring miss important instruction (viz., eligible content) in the general education curriculum. Reliance on the pull-out model was cited as an area of concern by both special and general educators, as well as building administrators. On the other hand, the introduction of co-teaching at the high school receives enthusiastic endorsements from teachers and building administrators.

General education teachers report that pull-out services, including speech and language as well as gifted services tend to be disruptive to instruction in general education classrooms as students move in and out of rooms during lessons.

The apparent separateness of instruction between general and special education results in mild uncertainty about one another’s roles in the school setting. In our interviews, we learned that special education teachers are pulled in two directions. As one special education teacher explained, "We are expected to provide instruction in students' areas of need and yet we feel pressure to expose students to skills and concepts in the general education curriculum that will prepare them for taking the Pennsylvania System of Standardized Assessment (PSSA)." Another special educator remarked, "Sometimes I am being asked to teach over the students' heads so as to expose them to the general education curriculum. Quite frankly, I need guidance as to how much time I should provide remedial instruction and how much time I should teach eligible content for the PSSA." We found that many special educators want greater direction from the Office of Special Education Services regarding their teaching roles.

A number of special education teachers express the desire to have more time in their schedules to support special education students in the general education classes. As one special education teacher remarked, "When a student has a reading disability, it means he will have difficulty reading in science and social studies classes too.” General education teachers too indicate that having more assistance from special educators during lessons would be helpful.

Parents from our focus groups indicate that tracking their child’s progress is made more difficult under the pull-out schedule because of the number of different teachers involved with their child.

Special education teachers acknowledged general educators for their efforts at differentiating instruction and yet cite the need for increasing general educators’ awareness and understanding of students with disabilities, a theme we heard over and over again.

General educators state the need for greater alignment between the special education and general education curriculum. General educators report difficulty
attempting to differentiate instruction for a wide-range of functioning levels among students in their classrooms, a situation that becomes exacerbated as students move through the grades. General educators also express concern that special educators do not understand their jobs and the importance of teaching to the state standards.

**Some Final Thoughts**

A program review should be thought of as the beginning point in the process of program improvement. It fulfills the first step in the problem-solving process, namely, problem definition. It also serves to elucidate program strengths that can be built upon in the future.

Data collection associated with a program review is a limited sample of program functioning at a particular point in time. Given the dynamic nature of most districts, circumstances can change quickly, rendering moot an issue that was identified as a problem only days before.

Our evaluation team witnessed such a situation first hand. Teachers we interviewed in the first couple of days of our program review activities reported having great difficulty completing AIMSweb probes in addition to all the other tasks requiring their attention. One teacher left us with the suggestion that it would be helpful if the Office of Special Education Services would hire instructional aides to assist with the administration of the AIMSweb probes. When we returned the next week, we were informed that two instructional aides were to be hired to do exactly that, administer AIMSweb probes. This episode supplies a perfect example of the rapid change that can occur. We believe such nimble and swift administrative response speaks volumes about Exeter Township School District’s sensitivity and responsiveness to the needs of its teaching staff.

Our team has concluded that the Exeter School District does many things quite well and that had we used “comparison to other districts” as the standard against which to judge its performance, Exeter Township School District would certainly be near the top of the list on many traits and features. We tend to agree with the words of one teacher, “If it isn’t broke, don’t fix it.” We certainly found few things broken; however, we also believe that adjustments in the short-term to the concerns we mention in this report could make things even better. Many of the short-term remedies we suggest require few additional resources with the exception of time, which we fully understand can be a dear commodity for busy professionals. Nonetheless, we believe the outcomes achieved would prove worthy of its expenditure.

The long-term recommendations we provide are more complex and will cause district officials to grapple with some fundamental issues that will likely impact the entire organization. Those recommendations entail answering some basic yet profound questions about the future of special education and gifted services within the Exeter Township School District.
Recommendations

Recommendations for the Immediate Future

1. We believe the need for refocusing the gifted program is urgent. Its development should include input from various groups, such as gifted teachers, school psychologists, representatives from the Office of Special Education Services, building principals, and parents. The process should begin by creating a program philosophy and a rationale that will guide the development of a vision and direction for the gifted program. Once established, the program philosophy will serve to inform the development of other critical program components as well, such as (a) eligibility criteria and identification procedures, (b) program goals, (c) curriculum and instructional practices, and (d) exit criteria.

2. Improve communication between the Office of Special Education Services and building administrators, special education teachers, and gifted teachers so that information is made available in a timely fashion. We believe communication can be improved through: (a) clear delineation of role expectations and responsibilities for key program staff, (b) a commitment to professional dialogue and the development of a process for providing assistance in a timely fashion, (c) regular meetings with a problem-solving focus that are agenda-driven with ground rules, notes taken and distributed, and (d) revisions to the procedure manual (a process that apparently has already been initiated) so that it communicates clearly the procedures teachers and staff can use to succeed at their jobs.

3. Provide training to special education teachers on the development of standards aligned IEPs. Standards-aligned IEPs along with standards-aligned instruction (a) involves the teaching of skills and concepts that are aligned with state standards, (b) ensures the right level of challenge for students, and (c) focuses instruction on the learning needs of each student so as to maximize achievement. Moving in this direction will ensure closer alignment of special education and general education instruction and give special and general educators a common language for communicating about student performance.

The Standards Aligned System (SAS) website (www.pdesas.org) provides a wealth of information for both general education and special education teachers on (a) the standards, anchors, and eligible content by subject area and grade level, (b) a curriculum framework that is linked to the Pennsylvania State Standards, (c) assessments, resources, and model lesson plans aligned with the standards, and (d) interventions linked to student achievement.

The PaTTAN website (www.pattan.net) provides training materials on the development of standards aligned IEPs that guide the IEP team through the process of (a) teaching in a standards aligned system, (b) assessing students against the Pennsylvania State Standards, (c) writing IEPs to address specific needs, and (d) monitoring student progress throughout the year.
4. We recommend that the Exeter Township School District adopt a proactive approach to the development of IEPs. Individualized Education Programs that are flawed in substance or procedure expose districts to litigation and expensive remedies such as the costs of private schools or compensatory education. We recommend the following:

- Provide ongoing and timely feedback to teachers about the accuracy and quality of the IEPs to ensure the development of legally sound and meaningful IEPs.

- Provide joint trainings for special educators and general education teachers about their roles on the IEP team so that their participation is meaningful and leads to specially designed instruction that can be carried out successfully in the general education setting.

- Provide a mechanism for the formative evaluation of the process of progress monitoring that has been recently instituted within the district. The process should include relevant stakeholders from across the district and focus on the impact of its implementation throughout the district.

5. Provide building administrators with training in the IEP process so that they can gain a better knowledge and understanding about their roles and responsibilities in provision of special education services. The quickly changing landscape of special education intensifies the need for ongoing training. For example, the reauthorization of The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Chapter 14 of the Pennsylvania School Code, the Gaskin Agreement, and the dramatic changes wrought earlier by the No Child Left Behind Act serve to heighten the need for more training.

Recommendations for the Long-Term

1. Modify and realign the infrastructure of special education service delivery to combine with general education and address students’ academic and behavior problems within the contexts in which they occur.

In our judgment, the Exeter Township School District employs a traditional model of service delivery used by many districts throughout the Commonwealth. The model is designed primarily to identify eligible students for the purpose of entering them into special education in order to receive academic and behavioral remediation or accommodations. The model performs its function well as evidenced by the number of eligible students served within the district. And because there are no exit criteria or procedures in place, students seldom transition back to general education once they have been placed in special education.

As the number of eligible students continues to increase, the district’s infrastructure for serving them well will likely suffer. Increases in the number of eligible students
translate to more IEP meetings, the expenditure of more resources, and most likely larger special education caseloads.

Our argument is not for denying children with disabilities the right to a free and appropriate education. Rather our argument is for making sure the right children are in receipt of those services.

The future model of special education we envision is one that blurs the lines between general and special education service delivery and one that focuses resources and interventions where problems first occur; within the general education environment. According to Fuchs, Fuchs, and Stecker (2010), effective intervention should lead to more meaningful identification by accelerating the progress of many low-achievers, thereby eliminating them from consideration as disabled. Exeter Township School District has already begun this process through its RtII initiative.

Having already begun the RtII process in some schools and not others, Exeter Township School District is in a fortuitous position to test the effectiveness of RtII for decreasing the rate of referrals to special education by collecting data and making comparisons between schools that use RtII and those that do not. We highly encourage this activity.

Moving in the direction we are recommending means making other significant adjustments to the present infrastructure. For example, rather than using school psychologists primarily for the assessment and identification of students for special education, we would suggest deploying school psychologists, at least part of the time, as interventionists, working alongside teachers in classrooms to assist with the development of data-driven, preventive academic and behavioral interventions (Power, Mautone, Ginsburg-Block, 2010).

Moreover, we contend that the present model of service delivery perpetuates separate systems of instruction – one for general education students and one for special education students. The creation of separate silos obviates effective communication between special and general educators and serves to perpetuate the myth that special education is the best answer for addressing the needs of low-achievers. Breaking down the separation between general and special education will also necessitate the introduction of new models of service delivery, such as specialist consultation models, team teaching or collaborative teaching like the co-teaching model presently in use with much apparent success at Exeter Township Senior High School.

Alternatively, a choice to sustain the present model will mean a significant expansion of the current organizational structure in the future, adding more personnel resources to the special education side of the school enterprise. More supervisory personnel, for example, will be needed to assist with the increase in
IEPs and LEA duties. As the district’s overall enrollment increases, more school psychologists will need to be added to screen and identify more eligible children.

2. We recommend eventually placing special education and gifted teachers under the direct authority of building principals. Such alignment would begin to break down some of the perceived barriers between general and special education as were mentioned in our findings. The function of the Office of Special Education Services would then be to supply expert consultation and advice to building principals on special education issues.

We list this as a long-term recommendation because for building administrators to fulfill this responsibility effectively they will need to gain additional knowledge about special education.
References


*Gaskin Settlement Agreement:* [www.pde.state.pa.us/special_edu/Settlement_Agreement.pdf](http://www.pde.state.pa.us/special_edu/Settlement_Agreement.pdf).


Appendix A

Principals – Interview Questions

1. Who supervises special education/gifted services and personnel in your building?

2. Describe how you communicate with your special education teachers.

3. What aspects of the programs seem to be working well?

4. What aspects of the special education/gifted programs are not working well?

5. How do you structure general education teacher attendance at IEP meetings?

6. How many IEP meetings are you asked to attend each year? How many are you able to attend? Who else fulfills the role of LEA at the IEP Team meetings?

7. How would you rate the support from general education teachers of the special education/gifted programs? On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = no support to 5 = Much Support

8. How would you rate the support from parents of the special education/gifted program? On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = no support to 5 = Much Support

9. To what degree are your special education/gifted teachers satisfied with the program? On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = no support to 5 = Much Support

10. What do you like most about your role with special/gifted education at Exeter?

11. What do you like least about your role with special education at Exeter?

12. If you could change one thing about your role with special/gifted education, what would it be?

13. How much formal training have you had in special/gifted education? What was the nature of that training?

14. Is there any other information you would like to share with us for this evaluation?

Special Education Teachers – Interview Questions

1. How long have you been with the district?

2. How many students are in your class or on your caseload?

3. How do students get added to your caseload?
4. How many aides are assigned to your caseload?

5. Rate the support you feel you receive from your principal. 1 (no support) – 5 (a great deal)

If very little support: What suggestions do you have for your principal to better assist you in your job?

If a great deal of support: What does that support look like?

6. Tell us about your relationship with special education administration from CO?

Follow-up: How often do you see special education administrators from CO?

Follow-up: Describe how you communicate with special education administrators from CO.

Follow-up: Is the type and amount of communication satisfactory?

Follow-up: What suggestions do you have for special education administrators from CO to better assist you in your job?

7. In what ways do guidance counselors facilitate your work?

8. How many IEPs will you write this year?

Follow-up: On average, how much time does it take you to write one IEP?

9. How much time is allocated for you to complete IEP preparation and meetings? Is that sufficient?

10. How are your IEPs scheduled? (spread across the year; all at the end)

Follow-up: How do you ensure that required team members are invited and present?

11. Does anyone review IEP drafts and provide feedback prior to the IEP meeting? If so, who conducts the reviews? Who provides you feedback on the final product?

Follow-up: What types of feedback have you received regarding the IEP?

12. What types of training do you receive on writing and implementing IEPs? Is the training sufficient?

13. How are appropriate placements determined in Exeter School District?
14. How do you define success? What barriers prevent you from achieving success during the day?

15. On average, how often do you communicate with the families of your students?

16. Typically, how do you communicate with general education teachers regarding Present Levels of Educational Performance, Program Modifications and SDI, and Goal development?

   Follow-up: Is this effective?

17. What suggestions would you have for general education teachers to better assist you in your job of providing services to students with disabilities?

18. Which staff development topics within the past year were the most beneficial?

19. Is there a program model or special education handbook to follow that outlines service delivery and your role in the provision of special education services?

   Follow-up: Tell us more about that? How did you know how to operate your class?

   Follow-up: Did you have a mentor? If yes, how helpful was that person?

20. Who supervises you and conducts your personnel evaluation?

21. How many observations of your teaching performance does your direct supervisor complete annually?

22. How many observations of your teaching performance do other personnel complete annually?

23. Who would you go to if you had behavioral difficulties?

24. What do you like most about your job at Exeter?

25. What do you like least about your job at Exeter?

26. If you could change one thing about your job, what would it be?

27. Is there any other information you would like to share with us for this evaluation?

   Gifted Teachers – Interview Questions

1. How long have you been with the district?

2. How many students are in your class or on your caseload?
3. How do students get added to your caseload?

4. How many aides are assigned to your caseload?

5. Rate the support your feel you receive from your principal. 1 (no support) – 5 (a great deal)

   If very little support: What suggestions do you have for your principal to better assist you in your job?

   If a great deal of support: What does that support look like?

6. Tell us about your relationship with special education administration from CO?

   Follow-up: How often do you see special education administrators from CO?

   Follow-up: Describe how you communicate with special education administrators from CO.

   Follow-up: Is the type and amount of communication satisfactory?

   Follow-up: What suggestions do you have for special education administrators from CO to better assist you in your job?

7. In what ways do guidance counselors facilitate your work?

8. How many GIEPs will you write this year?

   Follow-up: On average, how much time does it take you to write one GIEP?

9. How much time is allocated for you to complete GIEP preparation and meetings? Is that sufficient?

10. How are your GIEPs scheduled? (spread across the year; all at the end)

    Follow-up: How do you ensure that required team members are invited and present?

11. Does anyone review GIEP drafts and provide feedback prior to the GIEP meeting? If so, who conducts the reviews? Who provides you feedback on the final product?

    Follow-up: What types of feedback have you received regarding the GIEP?

12. What types of training do you receive on writing and implementing GIEPs? Is the training sufficient?

13. How are appropriate placements determined in Exeter School District?
14. How do you define success? What barriers prevent you from achieving success during the day?

15. On average, how often do you communicate with the families of your students?

16. Typically, how do you communicate with general education teachers regarding Present Levels of Educational Performance, Program Modifications and SDI, and Goal development?

   Follow-up: Is this effective?

17. What suggestions would you have for general education teachers to better assist you in your job of providing services to gifted students?

18. Which staff development topics within the past year were the most beneficial?

19. Is there a program model or handbook to follow that outlines service delivery and your role in the provision of gifted education services?

   Follow-up: Tell us more about that? How did you know how to operate your class?

   Follow-up: Did you have a mentor? If yes, how helpful was that person?

20. Who supervises you and conducts your personnel evaluation?

21. How many observations of your teaching performance does your direct supervisor complete annually?

22. How many observations of your teaching performance do other personnel complete annually?

23. Who would you go to if you had behavioral difficulties?

24. What do you like most about your job at Exeter?

25. What do you like least about your job at Exeter?

26. If you could change one thing about your job, what would it be?

27. Is there any other information you would like to share with us for this evaluation?

   **Guidance Counselor – Interview Questions**

   1. How long have you been with the district?

   2. How would you describe your role in the district? What duties do you perform?
3. What is your role at IEP meetings?
   How many IEPs do you attend every week (year)?
   How often do you fulfill the role of LEA at IEPs?
   How are you involved with the FBA process?
   How are you involved with the development of Positive Behavior Support Plans?

4. How many GIEPs do you attend every week (year)?
   How often do you fulfill the role of LEA at GIEPs?

5. What types of training did you receive to perform these tasks?

6. What proportion of your time is spent with tasks related to special education?

7. What proportion of your time is spent with tasks related to the gifted program?

8. What kinds of staff development do you receive during the year related to special education and gifted services?

9. How comfortable or prepared do you feel you are in performing the tasks associated with special education and gifted programming?

10. What suggestions would you have for CO administrators to better assist you with your role in gifted/special education?

11. What suggestions would you have for principals to better assist you with your role in gifted/special education?

12. What suggestions would you have for special educators to better assist you with your role in gifted/special education?

13. What do you like most about your role with the special education and gifted programs at Exeter?

14. What do you like least about your role with the special education and gifted programs at Exeter?

15. If you could change one thing about your role with the special education and gifted programs, what would it be?

16. Is there any other information you would like to share with us for this evaluation?
School Psychologist – Interview Questions

1. Describe briefly your area of authority and responsibilities within the special education program and gifted program.

2. Describe the mechanisms you use for communicating with your special education and gifted teachers. How would you characterize the efficiency and effectiveness of the communication system that is in place?

3. How do teachers, principals and others communicate their concerns with you? How well does that work for you?

4. What checks and balances are in place to insure legal and well-written IEPs and GIEPs?

5. As you know, we plan to conduct a focus group with parents. What do you think they will tell us? (Specifically, their perception of the strengths and weaknesses).

6. What would special education teachers say are the strengths and weaknesses of the special education (and gifted) program?

7. What organizational supports (personnel, fiscal, communication, training) could be put into place to enhance the functioning of gifted/special education programs?

8. Which group of people typically generates referrals for gifted evaluations?

9. We noticed that Exeter (17.0%) exceeds the state average (15.1%) in terms of eligible special education students and that there has been a spiked increase in the past 4 years at Exeter. What do you attribute these increases to?

10. What aspects of the special education program and gifted program seem to be working well and why?

   Follow-up: Is there adequate time for conducting timely evaluations? Are there personnel resources?

11. What aspects of the special education program and gifted program are not working so well and why?

12. Does the Exeter SD have the ability to turn a poor teacher into a good one? If yes, why? If no, why not?
13. If you could change one thing about your role in the Exeter School District what would that be?

14. Is there any other information you would like to share with us for this evaluation?

**Paraprofessional – Interview Questions**

1. Describe briefly your role and responsibilities within the special education program.

2. Do you work primarily within a special education setting or do you support students in inclusive settings (e.g., general education class, supervision at lunch, halls)? How much in each setting?

3. What information is shared with you about the students that you work with in the special education program? (e.g., disability category, annual goals, behavior plan, SDI, accommodations…)

   Follow-up: Who provides you this information?

   Follow-up: Do you feel this information is adequate for you to do your job?

4. Describe the types of activities you do when working with students with IEPs/GIEPs in the general education setting.

5. What types of training are you provided to assist you to carry out your responsibilities in the special education program? How helpful is the training?

6. What aspects of the special education program seem to be working well and why?

7. What aspects of the special education program are not working so well and why?

8. What do you like best about your job in the Exeter Township School District?

9. If you could change one thing about your job in the special education program, what would that be?

10. Is there any other information you would like to share with us for this evaluation?

**General Education Teacher – Interview Questions**

1. How long have you been with the district?

2. How many students in your class?
At the HS level, how many students will you see in a day?

3. How many of them are students with IEPs? GIEPs?

4. Typically, how do you communicate with teachers regarding Present Levels of Educational Performance, Program Modifications and SDI, and Goal development for students with disabilities?

Follow-up: What structures (e.g., meetings, email, common planning teams, team membership) are in place to communicate with special education teachers?

Are those methods effective?

5. Which staff development topics within the past year were the most beneficial?
Follow-up: How helpful was this training? (1, not helpful at all – 5, very helpful)

6. What barriers prevent you from achieving success during the day? Week? Year?

7. Approximately how many IEP and GIEP meetings do you attend each year?

8. Do you receive copies of the SDI?

9. What is your role in monitoring SDI?

10. How would you rate the support of the special education and gifted programs within your district?

11. What are some of the positive features of special education and gifted services in Exeter?

12. What are some of the most negative aspects of special education services and gifted services in Exeter?

13. If you could change one thing about special education and Gifted programs in Exeter, what would it be?

14. Is there any other information you would like to share with us for this evaluation?

Central Office Special Education Supervisors – Interview Questions

1. Describe briefly your area of authority and responsibilities within the special education program and gifted program, especially in relationship to building principals.
2. Describe the mechanisms you use for communicating with your special education and gifted teachers. How would you characterize the efficiency and effectiveness of the communication system you have in place?

3. How do teachers, principals and others communicate their concerns with you? How well does that seem to work for you?

4. How many IEPs and GIEPs are in the Exeter School District? What checks and balances are in place to insure legal and well-written IEPs and GIEPs?

5. As you know, we plan to conduct a focus group with parents. What do you think they will tell us? (Specifically, their perception of the strengths and weaknesses).

6. What are the impediments to IEP implementation in Exeter School District?

7. How many due process hearings or prehearings have there been in the past few years?

8. Typically, what issues have been in contention?

9. What would special education teachers say are the strengths and weaknesses of the special education and gifted program?

10. What additional organizational supports (personnel, fiscal, communication, or professional development) could be put into place to enhance the functioning of special education and gifted programs? What could central office administration do to better support you in your role with special education and gifted education?

11. Who typically generates the referrals for gifted evaluations?

12. We noticed that Exeter (17.0%) exceeds the state average (15.1%) in terms of eligible special education students and that there has been a spiked increase in the past four years. What do you attribute these increases to?

13. How would you rate the support from general education teachers of the special education program? On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = no support to 5 = Much Support

   Follow-up: Tell me what that support looks like in your mind.

14. What aspects of the special education program and gifted program seem to be working well and why?

   Follow-up: Is there adequate time for conducting timely evaluations? Are there personnel resources?
15. What aspects of the special education program and gifted program are not working so well and why?

16. Does the Exeter SD have the ability to turn a poor special education or gifted teacher into a good one? If yes, why? If no, why not?

17. If you could change one thing about your role in the Exeter School District what would that be?

18. Is there any other information you would like to share with us for this evaluation?
### Classroom Walkthrough Form

1. Behavioral expectations were being addressed; Routines are clearly defined?  
   - Yes  
   - Somewhat  
   - No  
   What did I see?  

2. Overall levels of student engagement:  
   - High  
   - Medium  
   - Low  
   What did I see?  

3. Observed a Prompt Hierarchy being used.  
   - Yes  
   - No  
   What did I see?  

4. Observed data being collected?  
   - Yes  
   - No  
   What did I see?  

5. Observed the classroom expectations being implemented.  
   - Yes  
   - No  
   What did I see?  

6. Positive reinforcers or positive statements being delivered?  
   - Yes  
   - No  
   What did I see?  

7. Instruction is explicit, interesting, age and individually appropriate?  
   - Yes  
   - No  
   What did I see?