THE INTERVENTION AND REFERRAL SERVICES (I&RS) DATA COLLECTION PROJECT: FINAL REPORT

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Division of Student Services

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INTRODUCTION

The intent of the Intervention sand Referral Services (I&RS) Data Collection Project was to assess the degree, quality and effectiveness of the implementation of the regulations at *N.J.A.C.* 6A:16-8, Intervention and Referral Services and the New Jersey Department of Education's (NJDOE) best practices model for implementing the I&RS regulations. A response rate of 80% of the approximately 720 schools trained by the NJDOE and a response rate of 80% of the schools that did not participate in the NJDOE's I&RS training program was anticipated. A total of 148 schools responded to the survey (6.1% of all public schools in New Jersey).   The response rate achieved for schools trained by the NJDOE was 11% (78 out of the 720 responded), and 3% of schools not trained by the NJDOE responded.

In the findings section of this report, information is organized by survey questions. For each question or set of questions, data is provided, in boxes, on the survey responses to the question(s). Following the presentation of the data is a brief discussion that interprets the data and identifies trends or issues related to the data. In some cases, this discussion involves more than one question. Any available qualitative data or information that provide greater clarity to the survey findings appear after the survey information provided in the boxes.

The recommendations section is divided into four broad categories: policy and regulations, training, activities across professional associations and groups, and research and data collection. The recommendations are provided only where the most critical need is indicated by the data. Each recommendation is offered for further discussion, since the survey results and qualitative interviews may not generalize to all I&RS teams. Major recommendations, based on a detailed review and analysis of the respondents' data, include:

- Establishing minimum data collection requirements;
- Establishing minimum standards for I&RS file contents;
- Creating guidelines for electronic storage of I&RS files;
- Clarifying special education regulations and interpretation of these regulations as they relate to I&RS;
- Developing data collection materials such as forms, programs, or sample instruments;
- Providing additional emphasis in training on program evaluation methods;
- Revisiting the components of the certification programs (e.g., teacher, principal, school counselor) at the colleges and universities to insure familiarity with I&RS;
- Developing a process to encourage researchers to collect I&RS data (e.g., grant programs with small funding or recognition, formal invitation announcements); and
- Making data collection part of the statement of assurances to attend NJDOE's I&RS training.

Several states offer some type of program to help struggling students, however, the NJDOE's I&RS program remains unique and a model that could be disseminated to other state departments of education. The recommendations in this report are offered to reinforce an already strong program.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The project was designed to gather facts from public school districts and school buildings on the degree, quality and effects of the implementation of the regulations at *N.J.A.C.* 6A:16-8, Intervention and Referral Services and the NJDOE's best practices model for implementing the I&RS regulations.

Other uses for data

In addition to supporting the implementation of I&RS in school districts, this report may provide assistance in the following areas:
- Revisiting existing regulations for the purpose of adding, amending or repealing the I&RS regulations;
- Considering alternative approaches and funding sources for I&RS;
- Reviewing NJDOE policies related to I&RS;
- Identifying materials or resources that might aid in the operation of I&RS teams; and
- Determining supportive services for I&RS teams.

Other potential uses of the findings from this project include helping educators focus on specific issues, such as determining the internal support needed within a school to increase the I&RS program's effectiveness and providing guidance on I&RS data collection.

METHODOLOGY

The primary data collection method was a web survey designed by the NJDOE and Kean University (KU), using KU's software program titled *Checkbox,* which was accessed by school staff directly from the project website (www.kean.edu/~irsdata). A second data collection procedure involved interviewing a variety of school staff members in a sample of schools, primarily through on-site visits or by telephone.

Sample selection

Notification of this project included a letter mailed on NJDOE letterhead to all chief school administrators (approximately 592) of districts with operating schools, and to the I&RS team leader of every school building with grades K-12 (approximately 2,442 schools), with a copy to the building principal. The list of schools was divided by region among six project staff members who made follow-up telephone calls to approximately 500 schools in an attempt to speak with the I&RS team leader. Although obtaining a larger sample of public schools was the desired outcome, 148 schools (approximately six percent of those contacted) responded to the survey.

In addition, email lists from the New Jersey School Counselor Association (over 3,000 names) and the Association of Student Assistance Professionals (approximately 500 names) were used to send announcements about the project. The principal investigator also made announcements at professional conferences, in graduate classes consisting predominantly of teachers, and at I&RS trainings.

Survey

The survey data collected using the *Checkbox* program contained filters which enabled the analysis of several scenarios to determine the significance of several data points. The Checkbox data was also exported to an Excel spreadsheet, which provided data manipulation methods for aiding in the analysis of responses.

School interviews

The qualitative data from interviews were reviewed and used as corroborating data for the survey. The wide variety of responses made coding this information difficult and time consuming. However, the richness of the qualitative data gave further insight into the experiences of I&RS teams that survey data cannot provide.

Limitations

Due to the limited sample size (n=148), the findings may not generalize to all I&RS teams. Variables that would explain why these schools self-selected to participate cannot be controlled for, including the possibility that these were the "best" schools, or that they participated for some specific motivation. More detailed recommendations are provided in a later section about future studies that may help provide a more reliable sample.

As is often the case with surveys, there were inconsistencies in the way some participants responded to questions, at times checking "does not reply" in one part of a question and providing conflicting information in another part of the same question.

Similarly, respondents used the write-in category of "other" and placed information already provided in the pre-selected choices. Some open-ended questions requested data, but participants did not reconcile their totals with data already provided. Additionally, some individuals answered a question with one set of data and entered different data in another question.

The size of the total population of respondents (148) makes interpreting data difficult, as did the question design that resulted in too many variables matched against a small response rate. For example, when making comparisons among many variables, what appears to be a large percentage difference may actually mean two schools. Another limitation of the data is in the assessment of I&RS team effectiveness, since the small sample size resulted in too few selections of each response to make valid generalizations. The reader should consider the limitations of the small sample size when considering the results of the study and the interpretations and conclusions made regarding the study. This study, however, provides a good baseline of data, and is a promising, initial exploratory study of I&RS programs in New Jersey.

Please note that the Likert scale used in many of the survey questions contains responses that are rated from "1 to 5." The descriptions of the criteria on the rating scale for the the on-line survey follows:
- 1 = "Not at all"
- 2 = "Rarely"
- 3 = "Occasionally"
- 4 = "Usually"
- 5 = "Always"

FINDINGS

The findings are organized according to the questions that the project attempted to answer. In order to maintain the comparability among questions, percentages are used (rather than a count) in all cases, except where whole numbers provide greater clarity. Since percentages greater than .0499 were rounded to the next whole number, totals may exceed 100%.

Data in the boxes are from the survey (following underlined titles) and, where appropriate, information from the interviews is labeled as "qualitative data." Also, when attempting to determine I&RS team "effectiveness," in relation to various items, "always effective" and "frequently effective" were counted together as positive responses for "effectiveness."

For each heading in this section, data-specific information is provided. After the presentation of most data (appearing in a box) is a brief discussion interpreting the data and identifying trends to the extent possible. In some cases, this discussion involves more than one question. Where qualitative data is available to provide greater clarity to the survey, this information appears after the text box. The "Recommendations" section is divided into four categories: Policy and Regulations; Training; Inter-professional activities; and Research and Data Collection..

DFG for schools responding to this survey.

> <u>DFG</u> - A (14%), B (11%), CD (12%), DE (14%), FG (18%), GH (9%), I (21%), J (1%)
>
> [Question #4]

Discussion: This represents a "flat" profile giving broader representation across all DFGs, with the exception of "J" districts, but does not provide a proportional representation of all districts in the state. The highest percentage of responses were from "I" districts.

Grades served in the schools responding.

> <u>Type of school (grade)</u> - K-5 (70%), 6-8 (19%), 9-12 (12%)
>
> [Question #5]

Discussion: This appears to be reflective of the proportions of elementary, middle and high schools in the State, based on data obtained from the NJDOE website. For example, high schools statewide account for approximately 16% of all schools, whereas high schools participating in this survey represented approximately 12% (18 schools)of all respondents. Elementary schools, defined as K-5 for this report, comprised the majority of schools responding, at 70% (104 schools).

The format of this question does not accommodate sorting for other data.

The current title in the district of person completing the survey.

> Team leaders – Per the survey instructions, the individual completing the survey is considered to be the team leader. As a result, when the individual completing the survey identified their title, school counselors most frequently completed the survey (34%), indicating that 34% (the highest percentage) of team leaders participating in this survey are school counselors. Other school staff who completed the survey (and are therefore identified as team leaders) were the principal (22%) and other school administrators (17%). Each of the other professional titles accounted for less than 6% of individuals completing the survey.
>
> Combining the smaller and more numerous titles into broader categories provides the following breakdown by type of individuals who completed the survey (reported to be the team leader):
> •Student Support Services staff (including school counselors, all Child Study Team member roles, reading specialists) - 70
> •Administrator (including supervisors, principals, assistant principals) - 68
> •Teacher (general and special education) - 11
>
> [Question #6]

Discussion: Since the I&RS team leader was asked to complete the survey, the data indicate that school counselors are providing a major leadership role for the I&RS teams, but the possibility cannot be ruled out that they were simply assigned the survey task. The extent of this role cannot be determined based on the number of respondents to this survey; however, the general trend indicates that school counselors are playing a major leadership role in I&RS teams.

Child Study Team members [i.e., school psychologist, school social worker, learning disabilities teacher-consultant (LDTC)] were not identified with great frequency (7.81% combined) as the individuals completing the survey. This could reflect the I&RS program's primary function as a general education program, led by staff from the general education program.

Approximate number of years an I&RS team has been operating in this school.

> Years of operation - A little more than 4 of 5 schools responding to the survey had teams that had operated 5 or more years (81%).
>
> •Less that 1 year - 2%
> •1-2 years - 7%
> •3-4 years - 10%
> •5 or more years - 81%
>
> [Question # 7]

The source of the MOST RECENT training to prepare the I&RS team to fulfill its obligations under *N.J.A.C.* **6A:16-8.**

       <u>Source of I&RS training</u> - The NJDOE trained 53% of the survey participants, 16% did not know by whom they were trained, and 5% were never trained. Other trainers conducted approximately 1 in 4 trainings (26%) of respondents. Of the "other" trainers, a special education staff member or administrator provided 22% of these trainings.

       When considering whether the source of one training resulted in more effectiveness of I&RS interventions, the following are the percentages of respondents within each category who indicated "always effective" or "frequently effective" to Question 40, in rank order:
- Other (private trainers or other organizations) - 72%
- NJDOE - 65%
- Do not recall who provided the training - 23% each
- Never trained - 8%

                                                   [Question #8 & #40]

Qualitative data: During school interviews, comments on NJDOE or private trainers were provided. More than one interviewee trained privately provided information that suggested the I&RS focus in the private trainings was shifted to an emphasis on "alignment with special education," with attention given to providing help with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders (ADHD) and Response To Intervention (RTI).

Discussion: This information leaves a number of unanswered questions about consistency of local practices with the I&RS and special education regulations and the NJDOE's I&RS best practices and the nature of the training provided to I&RS team members and special education staff. Unfortunately, the number of survey participants is too low to make any broad implications about the best source of training. A review of the data suggests that teams trained by "Other" trainers (other than the NJDOE) perceived themselves as "effective" at a slightly higher rate than those who attended NJDOE trainings. It is possible that the team's assessment was based on their perceptions of the degree to which they implement the NJDOE's best practices model, or that the "other" model reinforced current practices or preferences, requiring fewer adjustments. In future surveys, self-perceived "effectiveness" could be measured against other effectiveness measures, such as the elements of the NJDOE's best practices model and parent and teacher responses, to support the results.

Interviewees provided appreciable praise for the NJDOE's I&RS training program, and participants articulated the desire for additional training from the NJDOE, possibly as refresher training, since most respondents' teams (66%) have been operating for 5 or more years.

"Never trained" was fairly consistent across the range of years of team operation at about 5.5%. It appears that there was a correlation between the number of years a team was in operation and team member's ability to recall by whom the team was trained (16% of respondents overall could not remember, compared to 25% who could not remember for teams reporting 5 or more years of operation).

The number of I&RS teams that operated in the school.

> Number of teams operating - The number of teams operating in each school was overwhelmingly (90%) identified as a single team. The number of schools organizing additional teams by grade, alphabet, or other configuration was too low to provide an analysis.
>
> Generally, the few schools (14) with multiple teams were high schools, which may be due to larger student bodies than the average elementary school.
>
> [Questions #9 & #10]

Qualitative data: At least two interviewees described their school as having multiple teams. It appears that there may be a trend in middle schools where grade-level teams are also the building's I&RS teams, but the numbers are too small to make any general conclusions.

Discussion: Although the NJDOE training addresses the possibility of organizing as many building teams as determined appropriate, further study may reveal the reason(s) why schools, as typified in this study, appear to use a one-team system.

Professional staff who were identified as CORE members (i.e., attended regularly) of the I&RS team.

> Core members of the I&RS teams - The most frequently cited core members identified by participants were:
> - General education teachers (93% of schools)
> - School counselors (78% of schools)
> - Principals (60% of schools)
> - Nurses (60% of schools)
> - Special education teachers (54% of schools)
>
> Child Study Team members (i.e., school psychologist, school social worker, LDTC) were less frequently listed as core members:
> - LDTC (51% of schools)
> - School psychologist (40% of schools)
> - School social worker (36% of schools)
>
> The most common "other" members were reading and basic skills teachers.
>
> By combining the raw numbers of all identified staff positions into general categories, the following represents the percentages of schools that included the following staff as members:
> - Administrators (e.g., principals, vice principals, supervisors) - 20% of schools
> - Student support services staff (e.g., school counselors, Child Study Team members, other specialists) - 51% of schools
> - Teachers - 27% of schools   [Question #11]

Discussion: This profile may reflect two trends: information provided in the NJDOE trainings about the most appropriate team members, and staff who are most available to attend meetings, especially in elementary schools. It is reasonable to anticipate that the principal and counselor would be available to serve as I&RS team members, since they are not assigned to classrooms; however, the membership level of general education teachers reflects a commitment to the implementation of the NJDOE's best practice model. The responses to the questions (#14, #17, #18 & #19) on support of I&RS teams suggest that schools find ways to enable general education teachers to participate in the program.

Linking team composition to the question of team effectiveness was not possible because the numerous position titles provided by respondents resulted in numbers in each category that are too low to have significance.

How frequently the I&RS team TYPICALLY met throughout the school year.

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Frequency of meetings - Most teams indicated that they met monthly (42%), but combining responses to "once per week" (23%) or "every two weeks" (23%) indicates that participating schools generally met more frequently (46% who meet monthly vs. 42% who meet monthly) than once per month.

In total, 88% of schools met monthly or more frequently. The average number of total meeting times during the school year among all participants was nearly 17, with a range of between 180 to a low of 4 total meetings.

Comparing the effectiveness question to frequency of meetings is difficult because of the number of different responses. However, when the responses to these items are grouped together, the following indicates frequency of team meetings for teams reporting being "Always effective" or "Frequently effective:"

- More than once a week - 6% (three schools)
- Once every two weeks - 74%
- Monthly and once per week - 65%

[Questions #12 & #13]

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Discussion: There did not appear to be a great difference in perceived effectiveness between teams meeting once per week and teams meeting monthly or once every two weeks. The major difference appeared in the teams meeting more than once per week; however, this seemed to be an "outlier" response, since it applied to only three schools.

The time of day that the I&RS team TYPICALLY met.

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Time of day meetings were held - I&RS teams often express difficulty finding meeting time; however, schools appear to find a way to free staff during either a prep period or a free period (41%) to meet during the day. The majority of teams (60%) met either before school (20%), after school (20 %), or during a duty period (20%).

[Question #14]

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Discussion: Administrators seem to be able to find meeting time within the school day, indicative of a supportive environment. The use of before- and after- school meetings raises questions about why a regulated function occurs beyond school hours, however, it is noted that staff are often contractually obligated to work beyond the student's day. There is no way to determine whether this was the case in the 40% of the teams who meet before or after school.

Written guidelines established by the district board of education for involvement of SCHOOL STAFF & COMMUNITY MEMBERS in the school's system of I&RS.

Written guidelines - In regard to the mandate on written guidelines for the involvement of school staff in the I&RS program, a considerable number of schools do not appear to be meeting this requirement. While 60% have the written guidelines, and, 15% were in the process of writing guidelines, nearly 25% of respondent schools were not in compliance with this regulation.

Fewer schools indicated that they have written guidelines for the involvement of community members in the I&RS program (23%) and only 8% had guidelines in progress. Therefore, 68% of participating schools did not have written guidelines established by the board of education.

The comparison of perceived effectiveness ("Always effective" or "Frequently effective") to the establishment of written guidelines for the involvement of school staff in the I&RS program is below:
- Yes - 73% perceived their teams as effective
- No - 62% perceived their teams as effective

[Questions #15 & #16]

Discussion: Teams with written guidelines were moderately higher in their perception of effectiveness.

The degree to which the I&RS team was able to obtain support for the following I&RS activities.

> Support - The I&RS teams received support from their schools in a variety of ways. Responses to "always" and "frequently" were combined to indicate the percentage of schools that identified each type of support below:
> - I&RS meeting space (95%)
> - Administrative support for action plans (91%)
> - I&RS meeting time (90%)
> - Staff release time to attend I&RS meetings (82%)
> - Cooperation from staff (81%)
> - Clerical support (80%)
> - Release time for I&RS team members to attend I&RS meetings (77%)
>
> Two areas that the I&RS teams reported receiving comparatively lower support from their schools are:
> - Professional development (54%)
> - Funding (34%).
>
> These areas of lower support can be further clarified when the responses of "not at all" and "rarely" are combined:
> - Funding - 51%
> - Clerical support - 38%
> - Professional development - 23%
>
> Institutional support for I&RS teams was demonstrated by the following data, where respondents indicated support from:
> - Principal (92%)
> - Child Study Team members (88%)
> - Instructional staff (86%)
> - Student support services staff (79%)
> - Other school administration (72%)   [Question #17 & #18]

Qualitative data: Most interviewees described their principals as "supportive" of the I&RS program. Staff in more than one school were described as "less supportive," primarily because they believed that I&RS team could not provide help with some cases. One interviewee suggested that strategies would be perceived as more successful by "modifying expectations" of staff members.

Discussion: The amount of support provided to the I&RS teams is a very positive sign; almost all categories, with two exceptions, were rated as "frequently" or "always." This may indicate that the I&RS program is perceived to be an important part of the school program, since it was supported in a variety of ways and by a variety of staff. Financial support appears to be an issue for the I&RS teams, since funding was provided to only 34% of respondents' schools. Additionally, support for professional development was provided in only 54% of respondents' schools, which is a concern since professional development is a requirement under the I&RS regulations.

Two groups had lowest perceived support for I&RS teams: central office administration (46%) and the board of education (26%). Further study could determine the actual source of these negative perceptions; however, this finding may be attributed to less day-to-day involvement of these roles with the I&RS team.

Cost to operate the I&RS team (operating expenses and total costs).

Cost - When combining 3 categories of costs for the I&RS program, almost 77% of the respondents indicated a cost of less than $1,000, with more than half reporting that operating costs were under $300.

The following costs related to the I&RS program were identified by the respondents:
- Substitutes (28%)
- Professional development (19%)
- Supplies (14%)
- Program or curricular materials (14%)
- Equipment (12%)

The following are the range, mode and average of costs in dollars:
- Range - $0 - $38,000
- Mode - $4,000 (for those providing exact costs)
- Average - $6,910 (The "Average" reflects a few outliers on the high end of the range. Most schools reported costs between $0 and $300)

Inconsistent numbers were reported in the open-ended portion of Question #22, where the costs for the following items did not match the average costs identified for the I&RS team operations (Question #21):
- Implementing action plans ($1,037)
- Team operations ($1,143)
- Other costs ($174)

[Questions #19, #21, & #22]

Compensation - Most respondents reported that I&RS team members (70%) were not compensated for their work on the team. Of those who were compensated, 21% were released from duty and only 9% indicated compensation, mostly in the form of continuing education/ professional development hours.

[Question #20]

Qualitative data: In general, interviewees expressed difficulty in estimating costs for the I&RS team.

Discussion: This information suggests that I&RS teams have limited operating costs and that the most frequently identified cost item, substitutes, is expended by fewer than 1 of 3 schools. A low number (9%) indicated compensation of some type, and within that figure only 13% (12 people) indicated that they received a stipend. Only one respondent listed a stipend in the $600 - $800 range.

These numbers may indicate that I&RS team members do this work for reasons other than compensation. Interviews provided further evidence of personal enthusiasm and commitment as major reasons for serving on the I&RS team.

Written recommendations to the principal (including the degree of implementation and types of action taken).

Recommendations made and implemented - 58% of respondents indicated that the I&RS team submitted a written report to the principal that included recommendations for improving school programs and services.

When indicating the degree to which the recommendations were implemented, 38% responded that "all" or "most" were implemented, and 23% indicated "some" implementation. A very small number of respondents (3) said "none" were implemented.

Specific programs or services recommended by the respondents follow:
- Change(s) in teaching methods (34%)
- Change(s) in student schedules (29%)
- New program(s) (28%)
- New service(s) (28%)

[Question #23, #24 & #25]

77% of those who indicated they submitted written recommendations perceived their teams as always or frequently effective, and 66% of those who provided no written recommendations rated themselves as effective.

Discussion: While 58% of schools indicated that written recommendations were provided, 42% did not provide recommendations. While almost 6 of 10 schools providing recommendations is a positive sign, it also means that more than 4 of 10 schools made no recommendations. The question of whether a lack of maintaining data has an impact on the failure to make written recommendations may provide further insight.

Requests for assistance (including total number, type, source, and acceptance.

> Number of students helped - Participants indicated that a total of 4,407 requests for assistance (RFA) were received during the year (an average of 30 per participating school), with 4,153 action plans developed (an average of 28 per school). This means that 94% of all RFA resulted in an action plan.
>
> <div align="right">[Question #26]</div>
>
> The total number of RFA (4,435) provided by participants for this question was different from the number provided in the previous question. The data on the primary reasons for these RFA follow:
> - Learning (74%)
> - Behavior (16%)
> - Health (6%)
> - Other (4%)
>
> <div align="right">[Question #27]</div>
>
> Reasons RFA were not accepted - Of the RFA that were not accepted by I&RS teams, the following were the identified reasons:
> - Referred to other school resources (135/46%)
> - Insufficient prior remedial strategies (86/29%)
> - Insufficient data (51/18%)
> - Other reasons (20/7%)
>
> <div align="right">[Question #28]</div>

Qualitative data: Interviewees identified the range of 2-3 weeks as the time period for processing cases. While interviewees spoke of numbers of cases, explanations on the record keeping on these cases, including data, was vague. A common theme among interviewees was the sense that although the student's in the cases referred to the I&RS team had "multiple problems," the I&RS team's focus was on academic improvement. Among these multi-problem areas identified by interviewees were perceptions of "attention deficit disorder" and "family problems."

Discussion: Two issues worthy of further consideration: the number of RFA for code of student conduct violations was 0.6%; and the number of consultations with special education staff over RFA was 3%. Since there is no baseline data related to code of conduct violations or consultation with special education staff, these numbers are open to interpretation regarding the desired values.

The number of cases reviewed at each I&RS team meeting.

> New and old cases reviewed at each I&RS meeting - The number of cases reviewed at each I&RS meeting averaged 29 per meeting. Please see the discussion below for considerations on the average number of cases.
>
> <div align="right">[Question #26]</div>

Discussion: The average number of cases reviewed per meeting may have been more in line with the NJDOE's best practice model, considering that the extremely large numbers reported by four schools' (#16, #60, #57 & #50) are not factored into the average. It is possible that these schools counted all cases, including those that only received a quick status review. By removing these four schools, the average number of cases reviewed is 5, which is more in line with the best practices presented in the NJDOE's I&RS team training (i.e., a "30 minute per case" model for new cases, and swift and efficient status update of existing case loads). Since this is survey data, there is no way to clarify the outliers' responses.

The frequency that each of the individuals or groups of staff listed below submitted requests for assistance to the I&RS team.

Sources of Requests For Assistance (RFA) - When combining the totals for "most frequently" and "frequently," the following are percentages for who initiates the request for help with struggling students:
- General education teachers (93%)
- School counselors (22%)
- Parents/guardians (11%)

When combining "rarely" or "never," the following were listed as the least frequently cited (note that school counselors and parents/guardians are listed again):
- Non-professional staff (almost 100%)
- Central office administrators (99%)
- Subject area supervisors (97%)
- Coaches (96%)
- Parents/guardians (89%)
- Substance awareness coordinators (88%)
- Other school administrators (83%)
- Principals (81%)
- School counselors (78%)
- Nurses (77%)
- Special education teachers (73%)   [Question #29]

Discussion: The data provided for the sources of RFA indicate they come almost exclusively from general education classroom teachers (93%). The low numbers from professional roles that one might anticipate being a source of identification of students with academic (e.g., school counselor, principal, parent/guardian), behavioral (e.g., school counselor, principal, other school administrator, coaches, substance awareness coordinator, parents/guardians), or health (e.g., nurse, substance awareness coordinator) problems may warrant further investigation.

The number of teams identifying the purpose of the data for referrals to the Child Study Team (136 respondents or 94%) makes it likely that the perception of the I&RS team as primarily involved in the Child Study Team pre-referral process is strong, as reflected in question #32 where 93% of teams reported that the data was used to determine the need for a Child Study Team evaluation.

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The TYPES of information collected about students prior to I&RS team meetings to address I&RS requests for assistance.

<u>Types and methods of data collection prior to meeting</u> - 98% of participants indicated that they collected data.

Schools identified the following types of student data collected prior to I&RS team meetings:
- Classroom performance (96%)
- Student personal characteristics of concern (95%)
- Student conduct (93%)
- Health information (92%)
- Positive student characteristics (91%)

When asked about methods of data collection prior to I&RS team meetings, the following provides a ranking of priorities by percentage (with all choices equaling 100%) for the most common methods for information collection on students:
- Records review (18%)
- Interview with staff requesting assistance (17%)
- Interview of other staff (15%)
- Classroom observation (15%)

[Question #30 & #31]

Discussion: The vast majority of schools (98%) indicated that they collected data, which is a powerful statement. A large percentage of schools also collected information on positive student characteristics. Although limited in occurrence, preparation prior to the team meeting included two areas of "best practice" beyond the expected records review: interviews with staff and classroom observation. The inclusion of student conduct information suggests a holistic view reflected in the NJDOE's I&RS team training, despite respondent's low level of RFA for behavioral concerns.

Two of the items of information collected on the student prior to the meeting that were identified by the <u>least number</u> of participants, included consideration of the student's positive environmental characteristics (77%) and school counselor information (78%). Without a broad understanding of the student's environment and counselor input, team members may make judgments based on limited information.

In methods for collecting information, student interviews (9%) and parent/guardian interviews (13%) seem to occur less frequently. The decision to conduct student interviews is circumstantial, but parent involvement is mandated. The rate of parent interviews as a parent involvement and data collection strategy, while not required, may indicate a need for additional emphasis on parent involvement strategies during the NJDOE's I&RS team or other trainings.

How the pre- and post-data and other information listed below were used to formulate, monitor and evaluate I&RS action plans.

    <u>Data used to evaluate I&RS action plans</u> - The largest identified use for the data was to determine Child Study Team referrals (93%).
Other uses included:
- Monitoring the plan's success (86%)
- Modifying plans (84%)
- Determining the need for involvement in other school programs (76%)
- Providing feedback to implementers (75%)
- Determining appropriateness of objectives (74%)
- Identifying evidence-based practices for achieving action plans (69%)

[Question #32]

Discussion: The highest percentage of the use of data (93%) is to determine whether a Child Study Team referral is warranted. These data suggest that the I&RS teams continue to use data primarily for pre-referral to special education, rather than for providing appropriate assistance to students in the general education program. However, the survey data also shows that I&RS team data is used for numerous activities to help students in the general education program.

The types of information that were maintained in I&RS case files.

    <u>Contents of student files</u> - The most common items identified as being maintained in an I&RS case file were:
- The request for assistance (RFA) form (97%)
- The I&RS action plan (95%)
- Prior interventions checklist (93%)
- Information/data collection form (91%)

Nearly as typical as these items were:
- Outreach to parents/guardians (83%)
- I&RS correspondence (72%)
- Case-related correspondence (64%)
- Team meeting minutes (60%)

Other items, including case coordinator checklists, were identified by less than half of the respondents.

[Question #33]

Qualitative data: Although participants were resistant to allowing the member of the research team to view the contents of student I&RS files, site visits supported the NJDOE best practice model for actual file contents. Generally, it was found that the forms teams used were adapted from those provided in the NJDOE's publication titled *Resource Manual for Intervention and Referral Services*, and that the contents of the files followed the NJDOE's best practices model.

Discussion: From the site visits, items maintained in folders varied due to individual school needs.

Where I&RS records and files were stored in the school.

Records storage - I&RS records were stored in a separate location from the student's permanent record, according to 66% of respondents. Electronic records for the I&RS were identified by 29% of the schools.

[Question #34]

Discussion: Only 5% of respondents indicated that the I&RS files were stored with the student's permanent record (i.e., cumulative file), which is consistent with the NJDOE's messages about separate I&RS records. 29% of the schools use some form of electronic media for I&RS records.

The frequency and degree that parents or guardians of students who were the subjects of I&RS cases were TYPICALLY invited to participate in the I&RS team process (this does not necessarily include attendance at team meetings) and the types of activities in which parents or guardians participated.

Invitation of parents/guardians - When combining "always" (55%) and "frequently" (20%), 75% of schools invited parents/guardians to participate in the I&RS team process. Only 10% reported that parents/guardians were "rarely/never" invited and 15% indicated they were "occasionally" invited. The type of parent involvement is reflected below:
- Updated on the outcomes of the action plans (85%)
- Informed about the team meetings (80%)
- Mail sent from the team (64%)
- Telephoned by the team (59%)

Effectiveness of I&RS teams was considered by pairing Question 35 ("how often parents/guardians were invited to participate") with Question 40 ("evaluate the team's overall effectiveness"). Using the same effectiveness benchmark applied in earlier questions ("always effective" and "frequently effective") compared with parent involvement ("always invited " and "frequently invited"), 53% of teams involving parents perceived their teams as effective.

[Questions #35, #36, #37 & #40]

Qualitative data: Interviewees corroborated the survey data on parent/guardian involvement, indicating that they, too, involve parents/guardians in the manner listed in the above data. There were comments about "staff feeling intimidated" when parents/guardians attend I&RS meetings, as is explained might be the case during NJDOE's I&RS team trainings.

Another interviewee suggested that "parents are brought in separately" to reduce parent's/guardian's sense of intimidation when facing a large committee of school staff, which is consistent with NJDOE's best practices.

Discussion: While respondents indicated a high degree of parent involvement (3 of 4), this involvement primarily is in the form of passive involvement (e.g., updated on outcomes, informed of meetings, and receiving mail and telephone calls). The most active types of involvement received the lowest percentages: "included in the plan" (55%), "given responsibilities in the plan" (51%), and "attended an I&RS meeting at school" (48%).

The degree to which the following types of follow-up activities were TYPICALLY conducted with the individuals responsible for implementing I&RS action plans.

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Action plan follow up – Below are the follow-up activities most frequently identified by more than 50% of respondents who indicated "always" or "frequently:"
- In-person interviews/conversations (72%)
- Written memos or notes (55%)
- Observations (46%)
- Telephone interviews/conversations (41%)

Considering the high numbers of negative responses, as indicated by "never" or "rarely," the following were areas of the lowest implementation:
- No follow-up actions - 57%
- Written surveys - 52%
- Provision of professional development - 52%
- Telephone interviews/conversations - 33%

[Question #37]

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Discussion: These data suggest that the I&RS teams are employing best practices and activities, including classroom observations. The trend similar to the previously described issue on parent/guardian involvement continues here in the form of follow up, where almost 6 out of 10 respondents indicated no follow up. While most teams used a variety of follow-up activities, the least common were the provision of professional development activities and the use of written surveys.

The overall effectiveness [of I&RS teams] in remediating student learning, behavior, or health problems, based on pre- and post-data and other information on the status of I&RS action plans and the TYPES OF INFORMATION and collection method used to evaluate the effectiveness of the I&RS team.

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How data collected by I&RS teams was used to evaluate effectiveness of the teams:
- To improve effectiveness - 47%
- To improve building implementation of the I&RS - 42%
- To make recommendations to the school administration - 26%
- Not collected - 17%
- To make recommendations to the board of education - 14%

[Question #39]

Evaluating the I&RS team's effectiveness - When the "always" and "frequently" responses were combined, 69% of respondents found their teams to be effective. 30% found plans "occasionally effective," and 1% found plans "rarely effective."

[Question #40]

Data collection methods – The degree to which respondents indicated the following types of data were collected, followed by an analysis of perceived team effectiveness is provided below:

- Action plan implementation (50%) - 80% found their work effective
- Action plan achievement of behavioral objectives (49%) - 71% found their work effective
- Satisfaction of the staff member submitting a RFA (44%) - 64% found their work effective
- Records on learning, behavior and health of students served by the I&RS (44%)

Slightly more than one of three schools reported that they did not collect data (35%), and of these teams 47% responded that they were "always" or "frequently" effective. The remaining items were identified by less than a third of the participants.

[Questions #38 & #40]

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Qualitative data: Most interviewees had difficulty explaining how they use data to evaluate effectiveness of plans. Most strategies for evaluating successes involved using the number of RFAs submitted and the number of closed cases, with little use of qualitative evaluation (e.g., feedback and perceptions of those served).

Discussion: The finding that 7 of 10 schools believe their plans are "always effective" or "frequently effective" is an encouraging indicator.

The extent to which the I&RS team used external and internal resources to address students' learning, behavioral, or health issues.

<u>Use of resources</u> - In using external resources, by combining "always" and "frequently," participants indicated use of the following resources:
- Public social service agencies (17%)
- Public recreation programs (11%)
- Private practitioners (9%)
- Health services (9%)
- All other items combined were less than 9%.

In identifying school resources (internal), using the same method of combining "always" and "frequently," the following are rates of resources used. The second set of percentages reflects combining "occasionally" with "always" and "frequently:"

	always + frequently	plus occasionally
School counselor	(71%)	(86%)
School administrator	(70%)	(89%)
School nurse	(54%)	(86%)
Learning disabilities teacher-consultant	(51%)	(81%)
Reading specialist	(43%)	(62%)
School psychologist	(39%)	(79%)
School social worker	(38%)	(72%)
Resource room teacher	(34%)	(72%)
Substance awareness coordinator	(19%)	(29%)
ESL/bilingual teacher	(16%)	(42%)

[Questions #41 & #42]

Discussion: It is difficult to determine the reasons for the infrequent use of outside resources. It may be because the majority of RFA are for academic difficulties, hence the use of school resources; or the majority of problems were addressed successfully in school because the characteristics of the cases were appropriate for the use of school resources; or perhaps the team is unaware of or has had difficulty in using external resources; or appropriate external resources were not available or finances or insurance were not available to pay for the use of the resources; or parents either disagreed with the recommendation for involvement of outside resources or chose not to pursue the use of these resources.

The type(s) of professional development activities that were engaged in by the I&RS members.

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    <u>Professional development</u> – Below are the types of professional development activities used by respondents, followed by perceived team effectiveness:

- •Conferences and workshops attended off school grounds - 51%
- •In-service programs presented by district staff on school grounds - 47%
- •In-service programs presented on school grounds by outside experts - 35%
- •No professional development was provided - 21%
- •Internet research - 11%
- •The percentages of the remaining activities were too small to note.

    In comparing the effectiveness of I&RS teams in relation to professional development, the same process used in previous questions applies:
- •In-service by school district personnel - 78% perceived their teams as effective
- •Conference and workshops - 73% perceived their teams as effective
- •No professional development - 63% perceived their teams as effective

                                     [Question #43]

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Qualitative data: Many interviewees spoke of the need for more training and support from NJDOE. Additional ideas included the provision of software from NJDOE that would include information on intervention strategies, I&RS forms, the use of resources external to the school; and NJDOE sponsoring a forum for the sharing of ideas. Several schools suggested that a newsletter would be helpful.

Discussion: Conferences and staff-led in-service programs appear to be the most common methods for supporting professional development. The infrequent use of outside experts may reflect budget issues or another reason unidentified by this survey. Participants already indicated that the I&RS program is not expensive to operate, yet one of the inhibiting factors to more extensive professional development identified was the lack of budgeted funds for the I&RS.

The frequency, format, and issues addressed in I&RS team maintenance activities.

Team maintenance, wellness, and issues of concern - The largest percentage of schools (43%) indicated that they conducted no team maintenance activities. Annual team maintenance activities were identified by 30% of respondents, and monthly maintenance activities were reported by 15% of respondents.

The format of team maintenance meetings was identified as follows:
- A regularly scheduled team meeting (33%)
- An annual team maintenance session held during a regularly scheduled meeting (22%)
- A meeting scheduled other than an I&RS regular meeting (13%)
- Does not apply (23%).
- All other meeting formats were in single digit percentages

The issues discussed most often during the team maintenance meetings specific to team wellness were:
- Reassessing the I&RS team's operating procedures (30%)
- Reviewing the team's mission (20%)
- Improving communication among team members (20%)
- Celebrating successes (16%)
- Building relationships among team members (15%)

The most common issues regarding team operations that were discussed at the team maintenance meetings were:
- Volume of cases - 71%
- Equal participation of members - 31%
- Action plans not achieving goals - 26%
- Attendance at I&RS meetings - 25%

When considering the impact of team maintenance on perceived effectiveness (Question #40), the respondents indicated the following in relation to the frequency of team maintenance meetings:
- Annually - 76% of teams that had annual team maintenance meetings believed they have effective I&RS teams.
- Monthly - 76% of teams that had monthly team maintenance meetings believed they have effective I&RS teams.
- No team maintenance - 58% of teams that did not have regular team maintenance meetings believed they have effective I&RS teams.

[Questions #44, #45, #46 & #47]

Discussion: There is a discrepancy in the percentage of respondents who indicated that their teams conducted no team maintenance activities (43%) and the percentage who reported "does not apply" (23%) to the team maintenance activities question. The reason for the discrepancy is not apparent from the survey data. However, the responses raise concerns that there may not be sufficient time for these activities; that team maintenance and wellness activities are not valued; that these activities are not encouraged or supported by administrators; or that some other factor(s) is involved.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations below are offered to strengthen what the survey data indicates is an already strong I&RS program, with the anticipation that they will be considered by the NJDOE to make strategic improvements in the uniform and effective implementation of the program. The recommendations are separated into four broad categories: policy and regulations, training, inter-professional activities, and research and data collection. Under each category, the first paragraph cites key findings from the study that support or are related to the recommendations that follow. Recommendations are based, in part, on the degree to which schools reported being compliant with the regulated I&RS functions.

Policy and Regulations

The recommendations regarding I&RS policy and regulations are made based on survey results and anecdotal information that gauge the degree of compliance with the I&RS regulations and the NJDOE's best practices for I&RS. Responses to Questions #15 and #16, for example, indicate a lack of written guidelines (see recommendation #5, below) and indicate that more can be done to encourage and monitor compliance with these regulations. Although the participating schools reported that they collect data (Question #30, 98%), more clarity or detail can be provided to the requirement for I&RS teams to "collect thorough information" (Question #31, 15-17%). The responses to question #23 point to the somewhat low level of compliance with the requirement that I&RS teams submit annual written reports to the principal (58%), further illustrating that more attention and support for this requirement is necessary to increase compliance with the regulations and effectiveness of team operations.

1. Establish minimum data collection requirements (e.g., number of cases, types of data, methods for collecting, recording and using data) for schools that could be listed on the NJ School Report Card.

2. Develop a checklist with specific requirements for monitoring that moves beyond "having a program in place" to provide assistance in the evaluation and improvement of the I&RS program.

3. Establish minimum standards for the contents of I&RS files.

4. NJDOE should clarify the relationship of I&RS teams to Child Study Teams, particularly in the Special Education regulations (*N.J.A.C.* 6A:14) and the Programs to Support Student Development regulations (*N.J.A.C.* 6A:16-8), so that local implementation accurately reflects NJDOE's policies on I&RS and insures consistency in all districts. The need for clarity is underscored by participants, who were interviewed frequently speaking about the use of the I&RS team primarily as a part of the pre-referral intervention process, rather than as a global problem-solving mechanism in the general education program.

5. The number of schools reporting being out of compliance with the annual recommendations and written roles and responsibilities requirements (e.g., only 58% submitted written recommendations to the principal; 40% had no written guidelines for school staff; and only 23% had guidelines for community member involvement) is a serious issue. Perhaps some form of monitoring, beyond the required signed statement of assurances for school teams to participate in NJDOE's I&RS team training, may increase compliance. If these requirements are meant more as a best practice and are unenforceable, then these regulations may need to be revisited.

6. There are currently a fairly low number of respondents (only 29% of schools) indicating current use of electronic storage for I&RS records. If electronic record-keeping were to become more widespread, the NJDOE should consider issuing guidelines or regulations on "best practices" for electronic record keeping to help guide the development of appropriate policies and procedures for I&RS teams.

Training

The recommendations below are based on findings indicating that I&RS team members and school staff who either are responsible for I&RS functions or who otherwise have a role (e.g., staff requesting assistance, staff providing consultation) with the I&RS team could benefit from professional development support. Four of the items below (#2, #3, #4 and #6) suggest that additional training is needed in the areas of data collection, data analysis and program evaluation. These recommendations are based, in part, on responses to the questions about methods of data collection, in particular, and the use of data and evaluation, in general. For example, question #31 indicated only 18% of respondents reported performing records reviews prior to I&RS team meetings. Question #37 indicated that little formal follow-up evaluation is conducted with the individuals responsible for implementing I&RS action plans (57% performed no follow-up, 52% do written surveys).

It should be noted that while the subject of evaluation is addressed in the NJDOE's I&RS team training, the collection and use of data deserves special attention beyond that provided in the basic I&RS team training. It is strongly recommended that more focused training opportunities be made available in these topics.

1. The NJDOE training is the method where most staff members receive I&RS training (53%), and many participants indicated that staff return to the training after several years. To insure consistency and have teams more accurately organize themselves based on NJDOE mandates and best practices, the NJDOE's I&RS team trainings should be continued.

2. Develop materials (e.g., spreadsheet, software) or a model to standardize data collection in a simple, user friendly way.

3. Provide more attention to program evaluation methods in either the initial or subsequent I&RS trainings, since the current training provides only basic skills or strategies for the assessment of the I&RS team's effectiveness.

4. Develop additional "add-on" training for new team members to support quality implementation and address problems encountered, which may include program evaluation and the effective use of data.

5. Establish an electronic newsletter or some other method for sharing problems and successes among I&RS teams.

6. Consider training others to conduct or expand the NJDOE's ability to provide technical assistance to I&RS team members by critiquing or evaluating local I&RS programs (without sanctions or consequences), with the intent to help them improve.

7. The I&RS teams may benefit from some form of clinical supervision (i.e., consultation) by someone outside the team to help maintain objectivity and to ensure that their perceptions of the effectiveness of their I&RS teams (see Question #40) are accurate.

Inter-professional activities

Many educational roles are involved in the I&RS program in various capacities. It is important that all certificated staff have a basic understanding of I&RS and their role in the I&RS process. This can be achieved in a variety of ways, but is critical to the long-term effectiveness and sustainability of I&RS teams.

1. Ensure that the educational certification programs (e.g., teacher, principal, school nurse, school counselor) include information on the I&RS regulations and the NJDOE's best practices for I&RS teams.

2. Provide special trainings targeted to specific roles (e.g., school counselor, school nurse, school psychologist) or conducted at a variety of professional groups' conferences to insure that I&RS information accurately reflects the NJDOE's I&RS policies and best practices.

3. Fully utilize the I&RS video programs developed by NJDOE and/or develop a series of lessons that can be used in various classes to familiarize current and future educators with the I&RS requirements and I&RS procedures.

4. Consider providing leadership training for the effective implementation of I&RS teams, in cooperation with the New Jersey School Counselor Association (NJSCA) and/or other professional associations.

Research and Data Collection

The recommendations provided below are generalized from all responses to the survey. Although the sample was small, the information that it returned pointed out areas that can benefit from special attention, including the collection and utilization of data, the relationship between the I&RS teams and the Child Study Teams (especially considering question #32, in which participants in the survey indicated that the primary use for data was to determine Child Study Team referrals - 93%), and the fairly passive nature of parent involvement in I&RS programs, as seen in question #36 where only slightly more than half of respondents indicated that parents participated in developing I&RS action plans or were given responsibilities within action plans. Other recommendations were derived from additional questions and opportunities for research raised by both the survey and the interviews conducted as a part of the data collection project.

1. Since it is clear that the collection and effective use of data can be enhanced, and since the NJDOE has not established data collection or data utilization requirements, establishing regulations or providing guidance on data collection, including options for data collection methods should be considered. With the variety of tools available, data collection is no longer an expensive process, and could aid I&RS teams in documenting achievement of their mission as well as serve as a rich information resource on I&RS programs for the NJDOE.

2. Develop a process to encourage universities to collect I&RS data through student theses and dissertations and faculty research,, with NJDOE offering small financial incentives and endorsements.

3. Make data collection a requirement as part of the "cost" of attending NJDOE I&RS team or other training programs. The statement of assurances signed by school officials as a condition for participating in the I&RS team training could include the requirement that data be submitted by participating schools for the year following the training.

4. Further investigate the nature, rate and impact of parent participation in the I&RS process to determine whether schools are not educating parents/guardians on the team's services and the parent's role in the I&RS process; or not encouraging parents/guardians to request I&RS services; or to determine other contributing factors for low parent involvement.

5. The use of the term "actively involve" when referring to the parent/guardian role in the I&RS regulations may be interpreted differently by team members and parents/guardians, and warrants further study or guidance.

6. Further exploration of parent/guardian involvement could be helpful in determining whether additional trainings and regulatory modifications could increase this pattern of involvement, as appropriate, specifically in I&RS team meetings.

7. The structure of I&RS team meetings would, by itself, make an interesting study and add to the NJDOE's understanding of the factors that facilitate and impede I&RS team efficiency and effectiveness.

8. Since 1 out of 4 schools indicated they did not use data to monitor progress, understanding how teams use data to make decisions is another area for further investigation.

9. The substance awareness coordinator (SAC) often observes the impact of alcohol and other drugs on students' academic, behavior and health problems. Another area for additional investigation would be to determine why SAC requests for assistance were so low (e.g., 88% of SACs indicated that they "rarely" or "never" submitted requests for assistance to the I&RS team).

REFERENCES

*   New Jersey Administrative Code 6A:16-8, Intervention and Referral Services (readopted 2006).

*   *Resource Manual for Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS).* Trenton, NJ: New Jersey Department of Education, 2002, reprinted 2008.

Kean University

I&RS INTERVIEW PROMPTS

School Name & Code _____ Site visitor's name_____

Name of individual interviewed_____ Position_____

Date_____

As part of the data collection process on implementation of the I&RS regulations and the NJDOE's best practices for I&RS, we are interviewing a few key individuals from both the building and district level to help us gain insight into the process and outcomes. I am going to ask you a few questions but you are not limited to these questions. If you think of something else along the way, please feel free to share it as well.

Did you attend an I&RS training conducted by the New Jersey Department of Education?
     If so, when?

     In what ways did the training help your I&RS function?

     What changes or additional training related to the I&RS would you suggest, if any?

What types of cases does the I&RS receive? Describe the nature of those cases.

     How long does it take a case from start (*Request for Assistance*) to actually appearing on the I&RS meeting agenda?

     What could reduce this time?

What is the most common presenting problem (*Request for Assistance)*?

     Do students typically come with multiple problems?

     How does the I&RS decide which to focus on first?

Is there a case or two that demonstrates how the I&RS process in this building helped a student succeed? In other words, do you have a few success stories you could share?

Describe the types of strategies you use?

     Is there a pattern?

     What additional services would you like to see?

What do you perceive the staff's support for the I&RS to be?

        How do you know?

        What would increase their support?

How were parents involved in the I&RS process?

        What are some effective strategies for involving parents?

Describe what took place at your last annual team maintenance meeting?

In what ways does the I&RS receive support for its efforts from administration:

        At the building level?

        At the district level?

What do you estimate this building's one year I&RS cost?

        The district's I&RS one year cost?

How effective do you think your I&RS is?

        How do you know?

        What do you use to measure its effectiveness?

Is your I&RS doing something that you consider outstanding and would like to share with others? Describe this…

If you think of anything else that you would like to share with me, here's how you can contact me…

APPENDIX B: WEB-SURVEY NUMBERED

Intervention & Referral Services - Data Collection

INTERVENTION & REFERRAL SERVICES (N.J.A. C. 6A: 16-8) SURVEY ADMINISTERED BY KEAN UNIVERSITY In collaboration with the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE)

*1. The University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved this survey. After reading the Informed Consent document sent to you, before proceeding with the survey you must read the following consent statement.
I have read the informed consent document and understand that my participation in this survey is voluntary, and that by selecting the "agree" button I consent to participation. If I do not want to take the survey, by not selecting the "agree" button, I will not be able to continue with the survey.

⬤ Agree (I consent to take this survey)

Most questions require an answer. When reaching the end of the survey you must select "Finish" to record the survey. After clicking on the "Finish" button, if nothing happens after a brief time, you must scroll back through the survey and look for a statement in red following questions that state "an answer is required". After answering those question, proceed to the end of the survey and click "Finish".

*2. School name
(This information will not be reported in connection with specific responses.)

[   ]

3. District Code*
*Spreadsheet available on the project website

[   ]

4. DFG for this school
*Spreadsheet available on the project website

[Select ⬍]

5. Grades served in the school
(Check all that apply)

☐ Kindergarten ☐ 7th Grade

☐ 1st Grade ☐ 8th Grade

☐ 2nd Grade ☐ 9th Grade

☐ 3rd Grade ☐ 10th Grade

☐ 4th Grade ☐ 11th Grade

☐ 5th Grade ☐ 12th Grade

☐ 6th Grade

6. Your current title in the district:
(Select the title that most closely describes your current position)

☐ Central office person responsible for I&RS

☐ School principal

☐ Other school administrator

☐ Subject area supervisor

☐ School counselor

☐ Substance awareness coordinator

☐ School psychologist

☐ Learning disabilities teacher-consultant

☐ School social worker

☐ General education teacher

☐ Special education teacher

☐ School nurse

☐ Other (specify) [   ]

*7. Approximately how many years has an I&RS team been operating in this school?

☐ Less than 1 year

☐ 1-2 years

☐ 3-4 years

☐ 5-6 years

☐ More than 6 years

8. Indicate who provided the MOST RECENT training to prepare the I&RS team to fulfill its obligations under N.J.A.C. 6A:16-8:

☐ NJDOE staff

☐ Never trained

☐ Do not recall

☐ Other (provide the name of the individual or organization) [   ]

PLEASE ANSWER ALL OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AS THEY PERTAIN TO THE I&RS TEAM ONLY FOR THE 2006-2007 SCHOOL YEAR.

PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION (ALL QUESTIONS APPLY ONLY TO THE 2006-2007 SCHOOL YEAR)

*9. Indicate the number of I&RS teams that operated in the school

☐ 1

☐ 2

- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4 or more

10. If more than one team operated in the school, identify how the teams were organized:

- ☐ Does not apply
- ☐ By grade (e.g., one team for each grade level)
- ☐ By grade groupings (e.g., grades K-4, grades 5-8, grades 9-10, grades 11-12)
- ☐ Alphabetically by student names (e.g., last names starting with A-G, H-L)
- ☐ Other (describe) [_____]

11. Identify which of the following professional staff were CORE members (i.e., attended regularly) of the I&RS team.
(check all that apply)

- ☐ School principal
- ☐ Other school administrator
- ☐ Subject area supervisor(s)
- ☐ School counselor(s)
- ☐ Substance awareness coordinator(s)
- ☐ School psychologist
- ☐ Learning disabilities teacher-consultant
- ☐ School social worker
- ☐ General education teacher(s)
- ☐ Special education teacher(s)
- ☐ School nurse(s)
- ☐ Central office administrator responsible for the I&RS
- ☐ Other (specify) [_____]

12. Indicate how frequently the I&RS team TYPICALLY met throughout the school:

- ☐ More than once per week
- ☐ Once per week
- ☐ Once every two weeks
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Quarterly
- ☐ Only for new requests for assistance
- ☐ Other (describe) [_____]

13. In total, how many times did the I&RS team meet?

[_____]

14. Indicate the time of day that the I&RS team TYPICALLY met:

- ☐ Before school

○ During the school day in a free or "prep" period

○ During the school day as part of a duty period

○ During a lunch time

○ After school

○ Other (specify) [_____]

*15. Indicate whether or not the district board of education has established written guidelines for involvement of SCHOOL STAFF in the school's system of I&RS

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Currently under development

*16. Indicate whether or not the district board of education has established written guidelines for the involvement of COMMUNITY MEMBERS in the school's system of I&RS

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Currently under development

*17. Indicate the degree to which the I&RS team was able to obtain support following I&RS activities::

*

	Not at all	Occasionally			Always
	1	2	3	4	5
Funding	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Release time for I&RS team members to attend meetings	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Release time for staff requesting assistance to attend I&RS team meetings	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Professional development opportunities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I&RS team meeting time	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I&RS team meeting space	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Clerical support	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cooperation from staff members not on the I&RS team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Administrative support for implementation of I&RS team action plans	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

*18. Indicate the degree to which each of the following school staff members provided support (e.g., verbal, materials, or otherwise) for the I&RS team's activities:

*

	Not at all	Occasionally			Always
	1	2	3	4	5

Instructional staff	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Student support services staff	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
School Principal	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
School administrator(s) other than school principal	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Child study team members	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Central office administrators	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Board of education member(s)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

19. Identify the items for which costs were incurred to operate the I&RS team:
(Check all that apply)

☐ Substitute teachers or other staff to cover release time for staff to participate in the I&RS team process

☐ Program or curricular materials

☐ Team member stipends

☐ Meeting space

☐ Professional development programs

☐ Consultants

☐ Food

☐ Supplies

☐ Equipment (e.g., filing cabinets, easel charts, computers)

☐ Other (Specify) [_____]

20. Identify how I&RS team members were compensated for their I&RS team participation:
(Check ALL that apply)

☐ Does not apply

☐ Stipend (if yes, indicate the amount in the "Other" box)

☐ Release from a duty

☐ Other (Please describe) [_____]

21. Estimate the TOTAL COST for operating the I&RS team, including costs for team meetings and implementing I&RS action plans:

☐ $0-$300

☐ $301-$600

☐ $601-$1,000

☐ $1,001-$2,000

☐ Over $2,000

☐ Indicate the total amount if over $2,000. [_____]

22. Estimate the pro-rated amount of the total costs identified in the preceding question for the following team functions:

Implement all of the components of I&RS action plans - $ ☐

Team operations (e.g., substitute teachers, meeting space, materials, professional development) - $ ☐

Other (please specify) ☐

If you indicated "Other", what was the TOTAL COST - $ ☐

*23.   Indicate whether or not written recommendations were made to the principal for improving school programs and services as a result of the I&RS team's annual review of its data, I&RS action plans and actions taken:

🔘 Yes
🔘 No

24.   Indicate the degree to which the recommendations were implemented:

🔘 Does not apply
🔘 None were implemented (do not respond to the next question)
🔘 Some were implemented
🔘 Most were implemented
🔘 All were implemented

25.   If either "Some," "Most" or "All" was selected for the preceding question, indicate the types of actions taken as a result of the I&RS team's recommendations:
(Check all that apply)

☐ Does not apply
☐ Change(s) in curriculum
☐ New program(s)
☐ New service(s)
☐ Change(s) in teaching methods
☐ Change(s) to budget
☐ Change(s) in staff assignments
☐ Change(s) in student scheduling
☐ Change(s) in staff scheduling
☐ Change(s) in policies or procedures
☐ Other (describe) [_____]

I&RS TEAM PROCESS (All questions apply only to the 2006-2007 School Year)

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*26.   Enter the following data for requests for assistance of the the I&RS team:

*

The total number of requests for assistance received [_____]

The number of cases for which I&RS action plans were developed

_____

The number of cases (old and new) reviewed per meeting

_____

The number of requests for assistance that occurred as a direct result of violations of the code of student conduct

_____

The number of I&RS requests for assistance that required consultation or coordination with special education staff

_____

The number of requests for assistance that were not accepted for I&RS team review

_____

*27. Of the total number of requests for assistance, provide the number of each of the following PRIMARY reasons for the request for the requests for assistance:

*

\# Learning Problems   _____

\# Behavior Problems   _____

\# Health Problems   _____

Other (specify reasons)   _____

28. Of the requests for assistance not accepted, provide the number of each of the following primary reasons the requests for assistance were NOT accepted:

Insufficient data or other information

_____

Insufficient prior remedial strategies or interventions

_____

Referred to other school resources (e.g., crisis intervention staff, principal, counselor, child study team)

_____

Other (specify reasons)

_____

*29. Indicate the frequency that each of the individuals or groups of staff listed below submitted requests for assistance to the I&RS team:
(Use the open-ended box to add "Other")

*

	Never	Occasionally		Most frequently	
	1	2	3	4	5
School principal	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other school administrators	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Central office administrators	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Subject area supervisors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
General education teachers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Athletic coaches	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Special education teachers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Substance Awareness Coordinators	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
School Counselors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
School Nurses	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Non-professional staff (e.g., facilities maintenance, food service, transportation)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Parents/Guardians	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[_____]	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

30. Inidicate the TYPES of information collected about students prior to I&RS team metings to address I&RS requests for assistance:
(Check all that apply)

☐ No information is collected prior to I&RS team meetings

☐ Attendance information (e.g., lateness to school and classes, excused and unexcused absences, truancy)

☐ Identification of positive student personal characteristics (e.g., social or other skills, talents, traits, interests, hobbies, activities)

☐ Identification of student personal characteristics of concern

☐ Identification of positive student environmental characteristics (e.g., friends, family members, faith community)

☐ Identification of negative student environmental characteristics

☐ Classroom performance (e.g., grades, homework, in-class assignments, following directions, motivation, ability)

☐ Student conduct information (e.g., consequences for violations of the code of student conduct)

☐ Health information (respecting confidentiality) (e.g., physical symptoms, hygiene, illness, nurse reports or records)

☐ School counselor information (respecting confidentiality) (e.g., social-emotional, substance abuse, chronic health problems)

☐ Participation in "special" school programs or services (e.g., Title I program, bilingual program, school-based youth services program, reading specialist, speech and language specialist)

☐ Other (specify) [_____]

31. Indicate which of the following METHODS of collecting information about students were used prior to I&RS team meetings to address I&RS requests for assistance:
(Check all that apply)

☐ No information was collected prior to the I&RS team meetings

☐ Classroom observation

☐ Interview(s) with the staff member(s) requesting assistance

☐ Interview(s) with other staff members about the student

☐ Interview(s) with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s)

☐ Interview(s) with the student(s)

☐ Records review

☐ Reports or checklist review

☐ Other (specify) [_____]

32. Indicate how the pre and post-data and other information listed below were used to formulate, monitor and evaluate I&RS action plans:
(Check all that apply)

☐ To identify evidence-based strategies for achieving the objectives of the plans

☐ To determine whether the objectives were appropriate (e.g., specific, realistic, attainable and measurable)

☐ To monitor progress toward achieving objectives of the plans

☐ To modify plans as needed to achieve the objectives of the plans

☐ To provide feedback to I&RS action plan implementers on the success of the I&RS action plans in achieving the intended objectives

☐ To evaluate curricular variables (e.g., level of curricular materials, pace of instruction, types of tasks presented, mode of task presentation, scope and sequence of tasks, and criterion for assessing student success

☐ To evaluate instructional variables (e.g., allocation of instructional time, task structure, individual vs. guided practice)

☐ To evaluate student performance variables (e.g., time on task, academic, coping and social skills)

☐ To evaluate environmental variables

☐ To determine the need for the involvement of other school resources in the I&RS team process

☐ To determine the need for the involvement of community resources in the I&RS team process

☐ To determine referrals to the Child Study Team

33. Check the types of information that were maintained in I&RS case files:
(indicate all that apply)

☐ Request for assistance forms

☐ Prior interventions checklists (may be included on the request for assistance form)

☐ Information/data collection forms (e.g., student information obtained from instructional staff, counselors, administrators and other school staff members)

☐ Results of outreach to parents/guardians (e.g., date(s), time(s) and result(s) of telephone contact(s), interview notes, meeting notes)

☐ Case coordinator checklists

☐ Release of information forms

☐ I&RS correspondence

☐ I&RS team meeting minutes

☐ I&RS action plans

☐ I&RS case-related correspondence

☐ Other (specify) [_____]

34. Indicate where I&RS records and files were stored in the school:
(Check all that apply)

☐ In a secure location SEPARATE FROM the student's permanent record

☐ In a secure location WITH the student's permanent record

☐ In electronic files that were password protected

☐ In electronic files that were accessible only to authorized staff

☐ In electronic files that were accessible on the internet or intranet

☐ In electronic files that were maintained on a hard drive NOT AVAILABLE on the internet or intranet

☐ In electronic files that were stored on removable or portable media

☐ Other (specify) [   ]

*35. Indicate how often parents or guardians of students who were the subjects of I&RS cases were TYPICALLY invited to participate in the I&RS team process (this does not necessarily include attendance at team meetings).

☐ Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Occasionally ☐ Frequently ☐ Always

36. Indicate the degree to which parents were typically involved in the following tasks as part of the I&RS team process (Check all that apply):
(Use the open-ended box to add "Other")

	Never		Occasionally		Always
	1	2	3	4	5
Does not apply	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Telephoned by the I&RS team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mail sent by the I&RS team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Informed about I&RS team meetings	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Attended an I&RS scheduled conference at school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Included in the development of the I&RS action plans	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Given responsibilities in I&RS action plans	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Updated on the outcomes of the I&RS action plans	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[ ]	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

37. Identify the degree to which the following types of follow-up activities were TYPICALLY conducted with the individuals responsible for implementing I&RS action plans (Check all that apply):
(Use the open ended box to add "Other")

	Never		Occasionally		Always
	1	2	3	4	5
In-person interviews/conversations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Telephone interviews/conversations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Written memos or notes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Written surveys	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Observations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Provision of professional development	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Provision of materials ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

No follow-up actions were taken ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

[_____] ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

EVALUATION/OUTCOMES

38. Identify the TYPES OF INFORMATION that were collected to evaluate the effectiveness of the I&RS team:
(Check all that apply)

☐ Information was not collected

☐ Information on the degree to which the I&RS action plans were implemented

☐ Information on the degree twith the I&RS team's action plans from staff members who requested assistance

☐ Information on the degree to which the I&RS action plans achieved the behavioral objectives of the plans

☐ Records on the learning, behavior or health status of the students served by the I&RS team

☐ Information on the degree of satisfaction with the I&RS team from school staff members who did not request assistance from the I&RS team

☐ Information on the degree of satisfaction with the I&RS team from school administrators

☐ Information on the degree of satisfaction with the I&RS team's action plans from parents/guardians who participated in the I&RS process

☐ Information on the degree of satisfaction with the I&RS team from parents/guardians who DID NOT participate in the I&RS process

☐ Other (please describe) [_____]

*39. Indicate HOW the information collected to evaluate the effectiveness of the I&RS team was used:
(Check all that apply)

☐ Information was not collected

☐ To improve the effectiveness of the I&RS team

☐ To improve the system of I&RS implementation in the school building

☐ To make recommendations to school administrators for improving the learning, behavior and health status of the students in the school

☐ To make recommendations to the board of education for improving the learning, behavior and health status of the students in the school district

☐ Other (Please describe) [_____]

*40. Evaluate the I&RS team's overall effectiveness in remediating student learning behavior, or health problems, based on pre and post-data and other information on the status of I&RS action plans.
(Check one)

☐ Never effective ☐ Rarely effective ☐ Occasionally effective ☐ Frequently effective ☐ Always effective

RESOURCES (All Questions Apply Only To The 2006-2007 School Year)

41. Indicate the extent to which the I&RS team used the following external resources to address students' learning, behavioral, or health issues:
(a space for an open-ended response is provide for other resources used)

	Never used 1	2	Occasionally used 3	4	Always used 5
Private practitioners	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Public social service agencies (e.g., mental health, substance abuse)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Public recreation programs (e.g., town recreation, Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCA or YWCA	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Private recreation programs (e.g., gyms, martial arts schools)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Health services (e.g., hospitals, clinics)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Law enforcement	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[_____]	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

42. Indicate the extent to which the I&RS team used the following internal resources to address students' learning, behavior, or health issues:
(a space for an open-ended response is provide for other resources used)

	Never 1	Occasionally 2	3	Always 4	5
Substance awareness coordinator(s)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
School counselor(s)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
School psychologist	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Learning disabilities teacher-consultant	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
School social worker	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Reading specialist(s)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Resource room teacher(s)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
ESL/Bilingual teacher	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
School nurse	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
School administrator(s)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Central office administrator(s)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[_____]	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/TEAM MAINTENANCE (All Questions Apply Only to the 2006-2007 School

43. Identify the type(s) of professional development activities that were engaged in by the I&RS members:
(Check all that apply)

☐ Professional development was not provided

☐ In-service program(s) presented by school district personnel

☐ In-service program(s) presented by experts from outside the school district

☐ Consultants brought in to work with the I&RS team

☐ Telephone consultation with experts

☐ Conferences and workshops off school grounds

☐ Conducting conducting internet research

☐ Conducting non-internet research

☐ Visits to or contacts with other schools

☐ Other (specify) [_____]

*44. Indicate how frequently the I&RS team conducted team maintenance (e.g., the management of group dynamics) activities:

⚪ Weekly

⚪ Once every two weeks

⚪ Monthly

⚪ Annually

⚪ No team maintenance activities were conducted (please do not respond to the question that follows)

⚪ Other (specify) [_____]

45.   *If the I&RS team conducted team maintenance activities, indicate the format for the activities :
(Check all that apply)

☐ Does not apply

☐ During regularly scheduled team meetings

☐ During meeting(s) scheduled in the school day, other than regularly scheduled meetings

☐ Off-site retreat - full day

☐ Off-site retreat - half-day

☐ In-school retreat - full day

☐ In-school retreat - half-day

☐ Annual meeting (during a scheduled I&RS meeting)

☐ Other (Please describe) [_____]

46.   What issues were addressed during the I&RS team maintenance activities specific to TEAM WELLNESS?
(Check all that apply)

☐ Celebrating successes

☐ Building relationships among I&RS team members

- [ ] Improving communication among I&RS team members
- [ ] Reviewing the team mission
- [ ] Reassessing the I&RS team's operating procedures
- [ ] Other (specify) [_____]

47. What issues were addressed during the I&RS team maintenance activities specific to ISSUES AND CONCERNS?
(Check all that apply)

- [ ] Volume of cases (e.g., too many or too few)
- [ ] Conflicts among I&RS team members
- [ ] Attendance at I&RS team meetings
- [ ] Equal participation of all I&RS team members in team meetings
- [ ] Deficits in leadership of the I&RS team
- [ ] Dissatisfaction among colleagues (e.g., teachers, administrators) outside the I&RS team
- [ ] I&RS action plans not achieving the stated goals
- [ ] Lack of focus during I&RS team meetings
- [ ] General dissatisfaction among I&RS team members
- [ ] Other (specify) [_____]

Thank you for taking the survey. After clicking the "Finish" button, if nothing happens after a brief time scroll back and look for red statements indicating "An answer is required". After completing these answers proceed to the end of the survey and click "Finish". If you are interested in participating in a brief on-site interview, please email the Principal Investigator at jmascari@kean.edu and we will contact you to schedule a visit.

[Finish]