

Efforts to push inclusion draw parents' ire

Schools in a Washington, D.C., suburb might succeed in their attempt to mainstream special needs students even as they fails at educating them.

Parents are outraged at a report from Montgomery County Schools that indicates teachers aren't well prepared to handle the ramifications of a district that relies on inclusion. It is the district's own review of a plan to shut down learning centers -- which segregated special needs students -- one year after that initiative started.

The report found that a tale-telling 100 percent of students transitioning into inclusion settings scored at the lowest level of the

state's math exam. Similarly, 81 percent scored in the lowest level of the reading exam.

Efforts to make the inclusion process work also failed: The study determined that mandatory teacher training sessions saw little more than 50 percent attendance, and that only one-quarter of the teachers tailored assignments and presentations to best reach each learner.

The county's PTA president pushed for a re-evaluation of the inclusion initiative, telling the school board "Our most complex students should have an educational path that is tailored to their needs, and not tailored to fit a square peg in a round hole."

More on this topic

See the [complete report](#) at the district's website.

The (Washington D.C.) Examiner newspaper summarized the report and touched on its backlash, but parents have added more comments in an [online forum](#).

Mainstreaming has seen a steady decline since 1990, partially because of parent opposition. A [Wall Street Journal article](#) explains the trend.

Do you have confidence in your child's IEP? Broder Law Group offers a [primer](#) on the process.

Inclusion isn't a good match for every child, and neither is a self-contained classroom. To make sure your child is getting the best education for him or her, be an involved advocate in the IEP process. Each child's Individualized Education Program is a tailored roadmap to the services and support he or she needs to succeed. Active participation in the IEP's development and follow-through are the only way parents can be sure their special needs child is getting an appropriate education.

Broder Law Group, P.C. will keep you up to date on legal issues affecting special education.

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