

REPORT OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DIVISION OF SPECIAL AND COMPENSATORY EDUCATION
ON
CLASS SIZE, ADVISABILITY OF AIDES AND RATES OF
REIMBURSEMENT
FOR EMR PROGRAMS IN VIRGINIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS



HOUSE DOCUMENT NO. 7

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

Richmond, Virginia

1981

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
House Joint Resolution No. 129.....	1
Acknowledgments.....	11
Introduction.....	1
Part I - Survey of States and Review of Literature.....	2
Part II - Case Studies.....	3
Introduction.....	3
Site Visits - Scheduling.....	4
Results of the Case Studies.....	4
Part III - Task Force Activities.....	9
Part IV - Findings & Recommendations.....	10
Part V - Department of Education Recommendations.....	12
Bibliography.....	14
 Appendices	
A. Case Study Activities.....	15
B. Task Force Activities.....	28
C. Survey of States.....	36

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 129

Requesting the Department of Education to study the rates of reimbursement for special class placements for the educable mentally retarded.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 3, 1980

Agreed to by the Senate, February 28, 1980

WHEREAS, the regulations of the Board of Education governing State reimbursement for special education programs provide for reimbursement for educable mentally retarded pupils at the rate of four hundred twenty-five dollars per pupil in a special class placement, but rates of reimbursement for pupils with other types of handicaps in special class placements range from five hundred eighty-five dollars to one thousand one hundred ten dollars per pupil; and

WHEREAS, the class sizes of special placements to which the rates of reimbursement apply are a maximum of sixteen pupils per class for educable mentally retarded children but maximums of six to ten without an aide and eight to twelve with an aide for all other types of handicaps; and

WHEREAS, the rates of reimbursement are established for special classes both with and without aides for every type of handicap except educable mental retardation; and

WHEREAS, no recent study has been done to determine the appropriate class sizes, the advisability of teacher aides or the cost of classes in the case of special education programs for the educable mentally retarded; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Department of Education is requested to study the rates of reimbursement for special class placements for educable mentally retarded pupils, including the appropriate class size, the advisability of teacher aides and the amount of the reimbursement. The Superintendent of Public Instruction is requested to solicit the views of teachers, parents and administrators of the educable mentally retarded. The Department is requested to report its findings and the recommendation of the Board of Education to the Governor and General Assembly prior to the nineteen hundred eighty-one Session of the General Assembly.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Acknowledgment is made to the following individuals who devoted their time and expertise to complete the task set forth by House Joint Resolution 129. Recognizing their valuable contributions, the Division of Special and Compensatory Education would like to extend their appreciation to:

Ms. JoAnn Murray, graduate student at James Madison University, who served as an administrative intern for this project.

Dr. Barry Knowles and Mr. Lewis Romano who served as consultants for the school division interviews.

Parents, teachers, administrators in special education, and university/college professors who very willingly served on the EMR Task Force.

School division personnel and parents who participated in the interviews.

Special thanks are extended to Dr. Robert Hanny who assisted in the design of the questionnaire and provided research guidance throughout the entire project.

HJR 129

INTRODUCTION

House Joint Resolution Number 129 "requested the Department of Education to study the rates of reimbursement for special class placements for educable mentally retarded pupils, including the appropriate class size, the advisability of teacher aides and the amount of the reimbursement." The resolution recognized 1) that regulations of the Board of Education governing State reimbursement for special education programs provide for reimbursement for educable mentally retarded pupils at the rate of four hundred twenty-five dollars per pupil in a special class placement, but rates of reimbursement for pupils with other types of handicaps in special class placements range from five hundred eighty-five dollars to one thousand one hundred ten dollars per pupil; 2) that the class sizes of special class placements to which the rates of reimbursement apply are a maximum of sixteen pupils per class for educable mentally retarded children but a maximum of six to ten without an aide and eight to twelve with an aide for all other types of handicaps; 3) that rates of reimbursement are established for special classes both with and without aides for every type of handicap except educable mental retardation; and 4) that no recent study has been done to determine the appropriate class sizes, the advisability of teacher aides or the cost of classes in the case of special education programs for the educable mentally retarded.

Thus it was resolved that the Department of Education would conduct a study examining certain aspects of programs for the Educable Mentally Retarded in Virginia's public schools. The following objectives were established:

- 1) To conduct a study of appropriate class size, advisability of teacher aides, and the corresponding amount of reimbursement for special education placement of educable mentally retarded pupils;
- 2) To obtain the input of parents, teachers and administrators regarding appropriate class size and the advisability of teacher aides;
- 3) To develop a report of findings and to make recommendations to the General Assembly.

In order to meet the above objectives the following activities were initiated:

- 1) A survey of states and a review of the literature were conducted, including both published and unpublished documents;
- 2) Case studies of programs for the educable mentally retarded were conducted in fourteen school divisions; and
- 3) A task force was convened to address the issues set forth in HJR 129 and make recommendations to the Department of Education.

PART I - Survey of States and Literature Review

A request was sent to each of the fifty states for information concerning the staff/pupil ratios in programs for the Educable Mentally Retarded. Forty-four (44) responses were received. The following table reflects the data reported by the various states. The current staff/pupil ratio in Virginia is consistent with the practices in the majority of the reporting states.

Table I summarizes the information reported. (See Appendix C for data from individual states.)

Table I

NUMBER OF STATES REPORTING MAXIMUM CLASS SIZE
(WITH AND WITHOUT AIDES) WITHIN GIVEN RANGES

	MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PUPILS PER CLASS				
	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25
Elementary w/o aide	0	8	21	4	1
Elementary w/aide	0	0	2	2	0
Secondary w/o aide	0	7	16	9	2
Secondary w/aide	0	0	1	3	0

The literature review conducted via a computer search of published and unpublished documents (ERIC and CIJE) revealed a lack of research regarding staff/pupil ratios in programs for the Educable Mentally Retarded. The only significant piece of research located was a recent study conducted by the Council of Exceptional Children (CEC) on special education class size (1980). The CEC findings documented the absence of policy statements for class size determination. However, five variables were recognized as

- * Columns will not equal 44 due to variation in state reporting.
- * Statistics received were presumed to refer to self-contained classrooms.

having effected the number of children assigned to special education classes. The five variables are: exceptionality, grade level, severity, type of classroom/program, and other (including distance between schools, use of classroom aides, etc.) (Mark, et al, 1980)

PART II - Case Studies

Introduction

To meet the charge of House Joint Resolution 129, the Division of Special Education and Compensatory Services determined that individual interviews with selected personnel from a sample of school divisions would best facilitate the task. Primarily, individual case studies would provide information required while accounting for the individuality of each geographic area. Secondly, the case study design would ensure more equal representation of divisions and personnel and parents within them than other methodologies. Thirdly, personal interviews would affect a greater amount of information than would the return rate of mailed questionnaires. Finally, case study interviews appeared to offer the most expedient and accurate method to obtain the necessary information.

The second step of the process was twofold: 1) determining specific personnel to be interviewed; and, 2) designing an instrument which would provide the required information. Specific personnel were deemed appropriate by meeting the following criteria:

- 1) Individuals who had direct responsibility for administering EMR programs;
- 2) Individuals who had direct responsibility for providing services;
- 3) Individuals whose students and/or children received those services.

Based on these criteria, special education administrators, building principals, teachers of the EMR and parents were felt to be the most representative. The instrument itself was designed to obtain data pertinent to Resolution 129. The format consisted of both open and closed questions specific to the issues and a section for overall comments and recommendations.

The instrument was field tested in two school divisions: a large urban division and a small, rural division bordering a large urban area.

The field tests were conducted in interview/questionnaire format. After each interview the participants were asked to critically examine every question for ambiguities, clarity and specificity. The suggestions were incorporated and subsequent revisions made, finalizing the instrument (see Appendix A).

The sites for the case study were selected to be representative of the following:

1. urban, rural, suburban
2. total school population
3. ethno-cultural population
4. geographic location

Although the criteria are broad in definition and the subsequent selection of divisions relatively small, (14 or approximately 10%) it was felt that demographic and geographic representativeness was ensured.

Site Visits - Scheduling

Letters requesting convenient dates for our visit were sent to each division. Follow-up phone calls were then initiated to establish and confirm the site visits. Whenever possible the Division of Special and Compensatory Services attempted to schedule interviews according to geographic location so as to reduce the travel, time and cost of the endeavor.

Personnel in each division visited were asked to secure the individuals to be interviewed. Consultants and personnel of the Division of Special Education Support Services conducted the interview. Teams of two interviewers visited each division, in all but two localities.

Results of Case Study Interviews

Methodological Limitations. In order to ensure demographic and geographic representation the Division of Special Education and Compensatory Services had to allow certain practical constraints to override technical considerations. Specifically, a larger, stratified, random sample would have been better in terms of research design. However, practicality prohibited a larger sample and a smaller random sample would probably have not been representative of the many strata that exist in the State.

A second limitation was the process of selecting participants to be interviewed. Although the criteria for selection was clearly defined, each school division was responsible for providing participants. Thus, there was no guarantee, nor can it be assumed, that random selection did, in fact, occur.

Despite these limitations the Division believes that a credible cross section of parents and school personnel participated and contributed to the collection of data.

Data. Large quantities of data were gathered in this study. This information can be classified into three categories: 1) a description of the sample, 2) recommendations regarding class size and 3) the advisability of teacher aides.

Table II describes the distribution of participants. This table shows that one hundred and twenty-two individuals were interviewed from fourteen school divisions. There were sixty-five EMR teachers, twenty-nine parents, fourteen school principals and fourteen special education administrators interviewed.

CASE STUDY DATA

TABLE II - SURVEY PARTICIPANTS BY SCHOOL DIVISION

School Division	EMR Teachers	Parents	Spec. Educ. Administration	Principal	N
A	6	2	1	1	10
B	6	1	-	2	9
C	1	3	1	1	6
D	1	1	1	1	4
E	5	2	2	-	9
F	4	-	1	-	5
G	5	5	1	1	12
H	4	2	1	1	8
I	8	3	1	2	14
J	6	3	1	1	11
K	4	2	1	1	8
L	5	3	1	1	10
M	6	-	1	1	8
N	4	2	1	1	8
N	65	29	14	14	122

Table III describes the types of classrooms staffed by the EMR teachers participating in the study. There was a fairly even distribution by grade level with twenty-six elementary and thirty-one secondary schools being represented.

TABLE III - TYPES OF CLASSROOMS STAFFED BY EMR TEACHERS

	Self Contained	Resource
Primary	13	
Elementary	7	1
Intermediate	6	
Middle/Junior High	13	4
Senior High	18	3

Tables IV, V, VI, VII and VIII describe the children of the parents interviewed. Most of the children were between seven (7) and twelve (12) years of age and were in non-graded, self-contained classrooms. In addition, the majority, twenty-five of twenty-nine, were "mainstreamed" for at least part of the school day.

These first six tables indicate that the sample appears to be similar to the population that actually exists within the state of Virginia. The majority of the EMR children fall within the seven-to-twelve year age range.

TABLE IV - AGES OF CHILDREN OF PARENTS INTERVIEWED

5-6	7-9	10-12	13-15	16-18	19-22	N
1	7	15	3	2	1	28

TABLE V - GRADE LEVELS OF CHILDREN OF PARENTS INTERVIEWED

K-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	Other	Total
3	3	-	2	21	29

TABLE VI - TYPES OF EMR CLASSROOMS OF CHILDREN OF PARENTS INTERVIEWED

	Self Contained	Regular with Resource	Total
N =	26	3	29

TABLE VII - CHILDREN OF INTERVIEWED PARENTS WHO WERE MAINSTREAMED

	Mainstreamed	Not Mainstreamed	Do Not Know	Total
N =	24	3	2	29

TABLE VIII - THE NUMBER OF EMR STUDENTS SERVED BY EMR TEACHERS AT VARIOUS LEVELS

	Self Contained			Departmental		
	Largest	Average	N	Largest	Average	N
Primary	10.7	9.5	12	-	-	-
Elementary	13.7	12.4	10	-	-	-
Intermediate	12.3	12.1	7	-	-	-
Middle/Junior High	12.2	12.8	11	15.5	31.3	6
Senior High	13.2	11.8	10	20.4	46.9	8

Table IX describes recommendations the EMR teachers, special education administrators and principals made about class size, with and without an aide. In general, the table indicates that: (1) the recommendations are considerably below current State maximum, (2) a teacher aide is considered a valuable asset, and (3) there is some difference in class size per grade level.

TABLE IX*
RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING CLASS SIZE

	With Aide			Without Aide		
	EMR Teacher	Sp. Ed. Admini.	Princ.	EMR Teacher	Sp. Ed. Admini.	Princ.
Primary	10.2	11.6	13.0	7.8	9.1	9.7
Elementary	10.8	11.8	12.9	7.7	9.9	9.2
Intermediate	11.6	12.8	13.0	8.4	10.1	9.7
Middle/Junior High	13.2	13.5	13.7	8.9	10.9	10.7
Senior High	13.8	14.1	14.1	10.1	11.3	11.1

Table X gives the average of the data for the three groups across grade level. This averaging results in establishing a range of class sizes representative of the three groups.

TABLE X
AVERAGE OF THE THREE GROUPS

	<u>With Aide</u>	<u>Without Aide</u>
Primary	11.6	8.9
Elementary	11.8	8.9
Intermediate	12.5	9.4
Middle/Junior High	13.5	10.2
Senior High	14	10.8

*The figures found in this table are calculated means.

It is interesting to note the discrepancies between the three groups in Table IX. EMR teachers always recommended lower class sizes (with or without an aide) than the other two groups. Special education administrators generally recommended smaller class sizes than principals.

If one accepts that the groups of professionals sampled in this study are representative of this counterpart in the state as a whole, it can be concluded that a class size of sixteen is considered to be too large. Further, (without an aide) the recommended class size ranged approximately from eight (8) to eleven (11) across grade levels while the recommended class size (with an aide) rose to between eleven (11) and fourteen (14).

Table XI describes the opinions regarding teacher aides. Parents are very supportive of aides as the data indicate.

TABLE XI

OPINIONS OF PARENTS REGARDING TEACHERS AIDES

	YES	NO
Child's classroom has aide	11	16
If no, should have aide	11	3

Table XII describes the number of EMR teachers in the sample who report having an aide. One fourth of those reporting indicate they do have the services of an aide. (Other data shows that only about a third of those were full-time with a single teacher.)

TABLE XII - EMR TEACHERS WHO HAVE TEACHER AIDES

	N	Paid	1/4	1/2	3/4	Full
Have an aide	16 (25%)	15	6	2	0	4
Do not	45 (75%)					

PART III - Composition and Objectives of Task Force

The Division of Special and Compensatory Education invited certain organizations to nominate individuals to participate on a task force. The composition of the task force included representatives from the Virginia Association for Retarded Citizens (VARC), Virginia Council of Administrators for Special Education (VCASE), Virginia Education Association (VEA), Council of Exceptional Children (CEC), and the Council of Special Educators for Personnel Preparation, as well as two additional classroom teachers of the Educable Mentally Retarded. (See Appendix B for listing of members and related correspondence.)

Four objectives were established by the Division of Special and Compensatory Education for the task force. These objectives were:

- 1) to study rate of reimbursement
- 2) to recommend a new rate of reimbursement
- 3) to determine appropriate class size for EMR pupils
- 4) to determine the advisability of requiring teacher aides in classes for EMR pupils

The data gathered through the survey of the states, the review of literature and the case studies were presented to the task force for their use in preparing recommendations for the Division of Special and Compensatory Education. In addition, the knowledge and expertise of the task force members and the opinion of their constituents were used in devising their recommendations.

PART IV - Findings and Recommendations of Task Force

This report has been prepared by the EMR Task Force to respond to the directive from House Joint Resolution 129. It is the consensus of this group that critical needs exist for reduction in class size and for the inclusion of teacher aides in programs for the educable mentally retarded pupils. Given the passage of nearly three decades since the current figures related to staff/pupil ratios have been evaluated, the task force feels that it is imperative to consider carefully the policy revisions as outlined in the subsequent recommendations. The following paragraphs present the rationale for these recommendations.

The current statute relative to staff/pupil ratio for EMR programs can be traced to the early 1950's. Since that time, there has been increasing concern regarding possible misclassification of pupils as mentally retarded. This concern and related research have led to definitional changes within the field which culminated in the 1973 definition of the American Association on Mental Deficiency. The AAMD, under the direction of Herbert Grossman, stipulated that mental retardation should be defined as "significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficiencies in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period" (p. 5).

The most significant aspects of the definition were the lowering of ceiling scores for measured intelligence and the increased emphasis on the dimension of adaptive behavior. The latter concept was intended to serve as an umbrella term referring to a variety of coping skills.

As a result of the wide acceptance of Grossman's definition, professional practice, as related to identification and eligibility procedures, has changed markedly. The consequence of these factors in programs for the educable mentally retarded pupils in Virginia is that the population being served has gone through gradual yet progressive changes. Therefore, a typical group of EMR pupils now tends to include a substantially higher percentage of individuals who do not possess sufficient adaptive skills while those with higher levels of adaptive functioning are no longer eligible for such programs. Hence, this population requires a more intensive degree of educational intervention than in the past.

Although programs for educable mentally retarded pupils were among the first to be developed in Virginia, when subsequent programs (i.e., learning disabilities and emotional disturbance) were established, no apparent effort was made to re-assess the EMR staff/pupil ratio in concert with the total expanded special education program. Therefore, while staff/pupil ratios for LD and ED pupils were reflective of parental and teacher concerns, and pupil needs, EMR ratios remained unchanged. Currently, ratios for self-contained classes for LD and ED pupils are set at eight without an aide and ten with an aide. Given the similar amount of diversity and the significant degree of impairment, pupils in EMR classes are seen as equally in need of similar reductions in staff/pupil ratio in order to meet their individual needs.

Another significant factor which impacts directly on the question of EMR staff/pupil ratio is the current state and federal mandate to provide each student with an individualized educational program (IEP). This concern for increased individualization of instruction has led to increased time commitments for pupil assessment, program planning, paperwork, evaluation, and meetings with parents and other staff members. These factors have recently been seen as contributing to increased stress and subsequent teacher burn-out.

In recent years the long-term value of effective programs for EMR pupils has been repeatedly documented. The 1971 report of the President's committee on Mental Retardation, (Richardson, 1971), indicated that approximately eighty-seven percent of EMR pupils are potentially employable on a competitive basis which compares favorably with figures for the general population. As the adage, "cheaper to train than maintain" suggests, the end result of effective special education intervention can therefore be the acquisition of vocational and daily living skills that will result in the development of individuals who will be self-sufficient members of the community. Ultimately, the reduction of staff/pupil ratios, although initially more costly, will be likely to directly affect the amount of subsequent earnings for mildly retarded persons.

Finally, concerns of parents for the well-being of their children have begun to focus on the disparity between ratios of EMR and other categorical programs. As a consequence, parents have frequently hesitated to approve the placement of their children in classes when the pupil/staff ratio is not seen as facilitating the individualization of instruction.

Recommendation #1

The Task Force recommends that the staff/pupil ratios should be reduced in order to provide the most effective instructional environment for educable mentally retarded pupils, as indicated on the following chart.

Recommendation #2

Based on the needs of the pupil, the Task Force recommends the provision of a paraprofessional to assist in the instructional process, as indicated in table XIII.

PROPOSED TEACHER/PUPIL RATIOS BY AGE/GRADE DISTRIBUTION

Grade level	Chronological Age*	Estimated Functioning Age	Staff/pupil ratio	
			Teacher w/o aide	Teacher w/ aide
primary	5-7	2-4	0	8
elementary	8-10	4-6	8	10
intermediate	11-13	5-7	8	10
mid/jr. high	14-16	6-9	8	10
senior high	16-21	8-12	8	10

Recommendation #3

The Task Force recommends that the rate of reimbursement for special class placements of EMR pupils be based on the standard state formula with one EMR pupil counted as equivalent to three regular class pupils.

PART V - Recommendations of the Department of Education

The Department of Education staff has carefully reviewed the information collected as part of the field survey and also recommendations of a statewide Task Force appointed by the Department to assist with the study of educational programs for educable mentally retarded students. Based on this review, and in consideration of a variety of factors that are presently influencing the total program of public education in the Commonwealth, the Department of Education offers the following recommendations:

<u>Educational Level</u>	<u>With Aide</u>	<u>Without Aide</u>
Primary	10 students maximum	8
Elementary	12 students maximum	9
Middle School/Junior High	No aide recommended	14 students maximum
Senior High School	No aide recommended	18 students maximum (Semi-self contained)

*Age levels in the above chart are descriptive, and not restrictive, except at the primary level.

The greatest need for a smaller pupil/teacher ratio appears to be at the primary level. While there is evidence that the quality of educational offerings would be improved with a lower pupil/teacher ratio at all grade levels, in addition to the availability of instructional aides, the need at the upper level is not as acute as found at the lower levels. This is in recognition of the fact that educable mentally retarded students are participating to a greater degree in general education classes as they move into programs at the junior and senior high level. This should be especially true at the senior high level where there is greater emphasis upon the acquisition of vocational skills. Accordingly, a special education teacher of educable mentally retarded students at the secondary level should be able to manage the development and implementation of IEPs for an increased number of such students in addition to providing instruction for such students in certain basic skill areas.

It is recommended that funding to support the implementation of the above pupil/teacher ratios be included in the Board of Education 1982-84 biennium budget request. Further, Special Education funds should be allocated during the 1981-82 school year to assist local school divisions with the employment of instructional aides at the primary level on a permissive basis. It is not recommended that pupil/teacher ratios be decreased for FY 1980-81 unless additional funds are appropriated by the General Assembly.

The Department of Education will conduct a study prior to January 1, 1981, to determine the fiscal impact on local school divisions to implement these recommendations.

October 23, 1980

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Mack, Jean H., Banesi, Josephine and Bunte, Joanne, "Special Education Class Sizes," The Policy Research Center. The Council for Exceptional Children for The Policy Options Project, 1980.
- Richardson, E. L., MR 71: Entering the Era of Human Ecology. Report of the President's Committee on Mental Retardation, Washington, D. C.; U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971.

APPENDIX A

CASE STUDY ACTIVITIES

1. Participating School Divisions
2. Sample Letters to Local School Divisions
3. Case Study Questionnaires

SCHOOL DIVISIONS WHO PARTICIPATED IN EMR STUDY

Alexandria City

Albemarle County

Brunswick County

Fredericksburg City

Henrico County

King William County

Norfolk City

Prince George County

Prince William County

Roanoke County

Rockbridge County

Shenandoah County

Wise County

Wythe County

Field Test Sites:

Goochland County

Richmond City

Alternate Divisions:

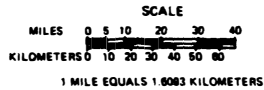
Lexington

Mecklenburg

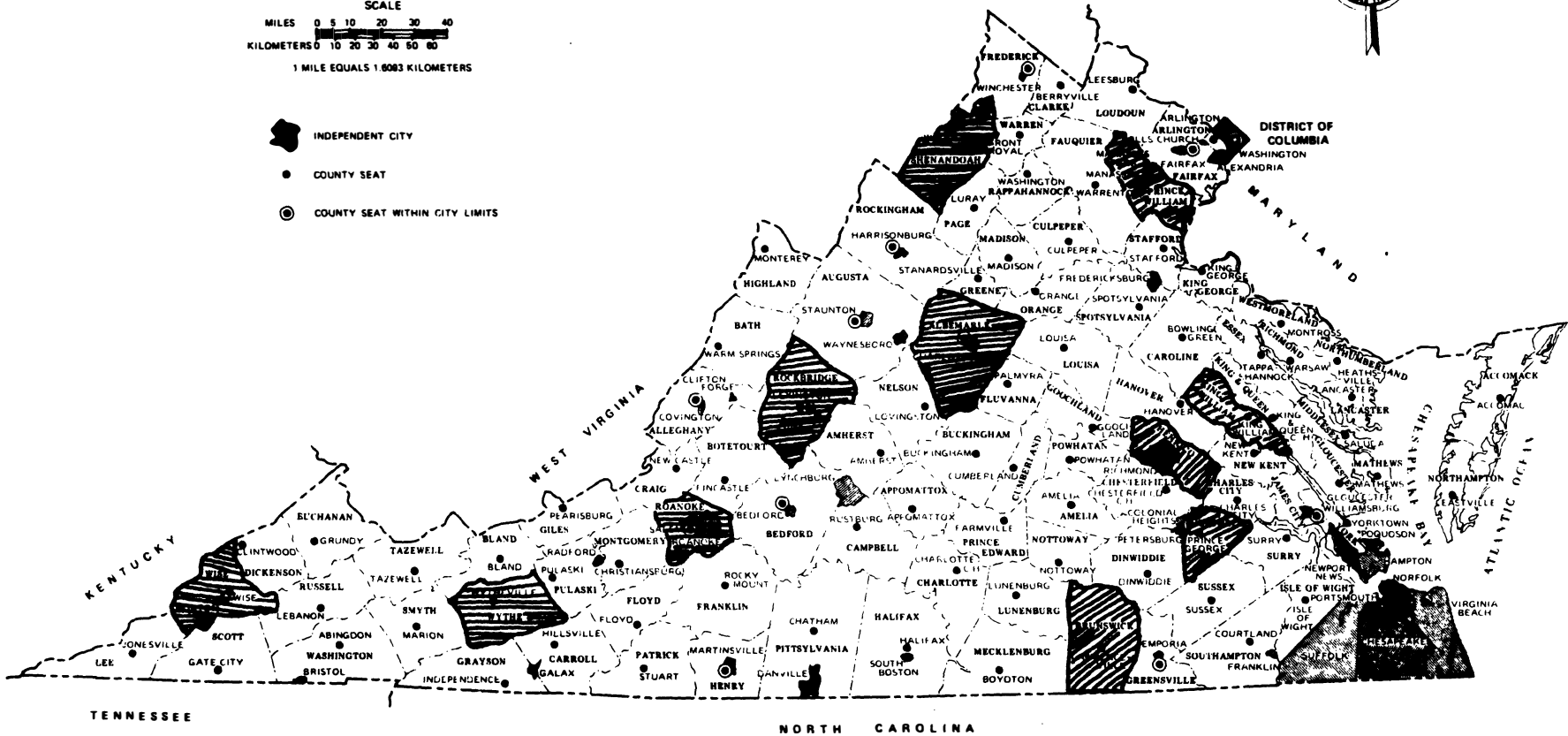
Virginia Beach

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION TRAFFIC AND SAFETY DIVISION COUNTY SEATS AND INDEPENDENT CITIES



- INDEPENDENT CITY
- COUNTY SEAT
- COUNTY SEAT WITHIN CITY LIMITS





COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 60
RICHMOND, 23216

July 1, 1980

Dear :

The Department of Education has been directed by the General Assembly, through House Joint Resolution 168, to conduct a study of "public school programs for language, speech and hearing therapy and their adherence to present regulations governing caseloads and to determine whether changes in these regulations are advisable."

The Department has also been requested by House Joint Resolution 129, to conduct a study of "the rates of reimbursement for special class placements for Educable Mentally Retarded pupils including the appropriate class size, the advisability of teacher aides, and the amount of the reimbursement."

In order to meet this charge, several case studies will be conducted to examine current school division practices for providing speech, language, and hearing services, and to attend to EMR pupil-teacher ratios, rates of reimbursement, and the advisability of teacher aides.

You will note from the attached copies of the resolutions, that the Department of Education is required to interview parents, teachers and administrators. We are requesting your participation in this endeavor by your selection of individuals from the following representative groups:

- 1 Principal
- 1 Special Education Supervisor, Coordinator or Director
- * 6 teachers of the Educable Mentally Retarded (2 elementary, 2 middle school/Junior High, 2 Senior High: where appropriate)

July 1, 1980

- 6 classroom teachers whose students participate in speech, language or hearing programs
- 3 speech/language pathologists (where appropriate)
- * 8 parents (4 whose children receive special language or hearing services; 4 parents of EMR children)

*It should be noted that, wherever possible, the selection of the teachers of the EMR and the parents of EMR students should include a few cases wherein the EMR student(s) are receiving speech therapy services in addition to the EMR program.

Tentative dates for the interviews will be July 14, 1980, through August 29, 1980.

Should you have any questions regarding the Speech/Hearing study please do not hesitate to contact Maggie Christensen, Administrative Intern, or Ms. Christina Clark, Supervisor, Department of Education, Division of Special Education Support Services, P. O. Box 6Q, Richmond, Virginia 23216, Telephone: 804/786-2673.

If you have any questions regarding the Educable Mentally Retarded study, please contact JoAnn Murray, Administrative Intern, or Anthony Faina, Assistant Supervisor, at the same address.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

James T. Micklem, Director
Division of Special Education
Support Services

JTM:wwh

Attachment

cc: Ms. Christina Clark
Mr. Anthony Faina
Mrs. Kathleen Kerry
Mr. Leslie Jones



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 6Q
RICHMOND, 23216

August 11, 1980

Dear :

We are confirming _____ as the date(s) for the case study interviews. Interviews should be scheduled at half hour intervals beginning around 9:00 a.m. If necessary, we will be available for evening interviews.

We appreciate your cooperation and assistance in this endeavor. Should you have further questions, do not hesitate to contact us at the Department of Education, Division of Special Education, P. O. Box 6Q, Richmond, Virginia 23216, Telephone: 804/786-2673.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Maggie Christensen
Administrative Intern (Speech)

JoAnn M. Murray
Administrative Intern (EMR)

MC/JMM:jj

cc: Leslie W. Jones



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 60
RICHMOND, 23216

September 11, 1980

Dear

Thank you for your participation in the case study interviews. These studies were requested by the General Assembly in House Joint Resolutions 129 (EMR) and 168 (Speech).

The data collected for the case study will be compiled and incorporated into the recommendations made by the Division of Special Education to be sent to the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Board of Education. The Department of Education will then make recommendations to the General Assembly for consideration during its 1981 session. Copies of these final recommendations will be distributed to the local school divisions.

Sincerely,

James T. Micklem, Director
Division of Special Education
Programs and Services

JTM/pls

cc: Christina C. Clark
Anthony G. Faina
Leslie W. Jones



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 60
RICHMOND, 23216

September 11, 1980

Dear :

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your cooperation and effort regarding the case study interviews. Your participation enabled us to collect the data necessary to respond to the House Joint Resolutions. We appreciate the time you spent in arranging the schedules for the interviews.

Please extend our appreciation to your personnel and parents who participated in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Maggie Christensen
Administrative Intern (Speech)

JoAnn M. Murray
Administrative Intern (EMR)

MC/JMM/pls

cc: Leslie W. Jones

HJR 129 - EMR Study Questions

(Responses applicable to 1979- 1980 academic year)

_____ Title of Special Education Administrator

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATOR/PRINCIPAL

1. Number of EMR teachers employed:

_____ self-contained
_____ resource

2. Number of students per EMR teacher:

_____ self-contained
_____ resource

3. Number of EMR teachers who had aides:

_____ (paid) aide full-time
_____ (paid) aide part-time
_____ volunteer aide full-time
_____ volunteer aide part-time

4. Number of aides in EMR classrooms: _____

5. What funding sources were used to pay EMR aides?

_____ Title 1
_____ Local-State Special Education funds
_____ CETA
_____ P. L. 94-142 Flow through
_____ other; describe _____

6. Under current State reimbursement regulations for special education programs, the maximum number of EMR pupils (in self-contained classrooms) is 16 whereas in other special education programs the maximum number is generally 8. In your opinion and from an educational standpoint, this class size is:

_____ elementary a) too large
 b) acceptable
 c) no opinion

_____ secondary a) too large
 b) acceptable
 c) no opinion

(ADMINISTRATOR/PRINCIPAL, P. 2)

7. If reimbursement were provided to lower class size of EMR programs, what would you choose as the maximum number of pupils per class? (Provide specific number) Why?

primary	_____	with aide	_____	without aide
elementary	_____	with aide	_____	without aide
intermediate	_____	with aide	_____	without aide
middle/jr. high	_____	with aide	_____	without aide
senior high	_____	with aide	_____	without aide

8. In terms of pupil/teacher ratios and the assignment of classroom aides, do you have any comments and/or recommendations based on your experience?

HJR 129 - EMR Case Study Questions

(Responses applicable to 1979 - 1980 academic year)

PARENT

1. How old is your child? _____ grade level _____
2. In what kind of EMR classroom was your child enrolled?
_____ self-contained
_____ regular classroom with resource assistance
_____ don't know
3. Approximately how many students were enrolled in the same class?
If Educable Mentally Retarded self-contained, how many? _____
If regular class with resource room, how many? _____
4. If your child was in an Educable Mentally Retarded self-contained classroom, did he/she spend any time during the day with regular students? In other words, was he mainstreamed? (List if necessary.)
_____ Yes
_____ No
_____ Don't know
5. Do you think the size (number of students) in your child's self-contained classroom was appropriate for his/her educational needs? Why or why not? _____

6. To your knowledge, did your child's Educable Mentally Retarded class have an aide? Has your child ever mentioned the name of another adult in the classroom besides the teacher who seemed to be there on a regular basis? Comments _____

7. If you answered no to the above question, do you think your child's class should have had an aide? _____ Yes _____ No
8. Do you have any recommendations/comments regarding the following:
 - A. pupil/teacher ratios
 - B. assignment of classroom aides
 - C. your child's program

HJR 129 - EMR Case Study Questions

(Responses applicable to 1979 - 1980 academic year)

TEACHER

1. In what type of classroom organization did you work?

primary	_____	S-C	_____	resource
elementary	_____	S-C	_____	resource
intermediate	_____	S-C	_____	resource
middle/jr. high	_____	S-C	_____	resource
senior high	_____	S-C	_____	resource

2. What is the largest number of Educable Mentally Retarded students that you served throughout this past school year at any one time? _____ (Note: if departmentalized _____).

3. How many Educable Mentally Retarded students did you average per day throughout the school year? _____

4. Did you have an aide in your classroom?

No _____
 Yes _____
 number _____
 paid _____
 volunteer _____

If yes, what percentage of time did the aide spend with you?

If you had a voluntary aide, how many hours of assistance did you receive per week? _____

5. Would you assign percentages of time to the following categories of responsibilities you delegated to your aide:

_____ instructional (teacher-directed instruction small group work)

_____ clerical (mark papers, filing)

_____ classroom management (behavior, control of large groups)

_____ housekeeping (wash blackboards, etc.)

_____ self-help

6. Which of the following best describes how you acquired your aide?

_____ assigned by local policy

_____ requested by me

_____ other

7. If reimbursement were provided to lower class size of EMR programs, what would you choose as the maximum number of pupils per class? (Provide specific number) Why?

primary	_____	with aide	_____	without aide
elementary	_____	with aide	_____	without aide
intermediate	_____	with aide	_____	without aide
middle/jr. high	_____	with aide	_____	without aide
senior high	_____	with aide	_____	without aide

8. In terms of pupil/teacher ratios and the assignment of classroom aides, do you have recommendations/comments?

APPENDIX B

Task Force Activities

1. Sample Correspondence
2. Listing of Task Force Members
3. Task Force Objectives, Agenda and Evaluation Form



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 6Q
RICHMOND, 23216

June 11, 1980

Dear :

The Department of Education has been directed by the General Assembly, through House Joint Resolution 129, to conduct a study of "the rates of reimbursement for special class placements for Educable Mentally Retarded pupils including the appropriate class size, the advisability of teacher aides and the amount of the reimbursement." As part of this process, a Task Force is being organized consisting of parents, teachers, administrators, and personnel from institutes of higher education.

The purpose of the Task Force will be to attend to the concerns of parents and professional educators regarding pupil-teacher and attendant rates of reimbursement for special classes for the Educable Mentally Retarded.

Assistance from the Virginia Association for Retarded Citizens is requested in the nomination of two (2) parents who could serve on this Task Force. The meeting is schedule for July 10 & 11, 1980 at the Sheraton Inn, Lynchburg, Virginia. Expenses incurred as a result of their participation at the meeting (travel, meals, and accommodations) will be reimbursed. We will appreciate receiving your nominations by June 20, 1980.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact JoAnn M. Murray, Administrative Intern or Anthony G. Faina, Assistant Supervisor, Department of Education, Division of Special Education Support Services, P. O. Box 6Q, Richmond, Virginia 23216, Telephone: 804/786-2673.

Sincerely,

James T. Micklem, Director
Division of Special Education
Support Services

JTM:pss

cc: JoAnn M. Murray
Anthony G. Faina
Leslie W. Jones



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 6Q

RICHMOND, 23216

June 23, 1980

Dear :

The Department of Education has been directed by the General Assembly, through House Joint Resolution 129, to conduct a study of the "rates of reimbursement for special class placements for Educable Mentally Retarded pupils including the appropriate class size, the advisability of teacher aids, and the amount of the reimbursement." As part of this process, a Task Force is being organized consisting of parents, teachers, administrators, and personnel from institutes of higher education.

The purpose of the Task Force will be to attend to the concerns of parents and professional educators regarding pupil-teacher ratios and attendant rates of reimbursement for special classes for the Educable Mentally Retarded.

Mr. Frank Sparks, President of the Council for Exceptional Children, has recommend you as a candidate to serve on the Task Force. We thank you for your acceptance of the invitation. The meeting is scheduled for July 10 and 11, 1980 at the Sheraton Inn, Lynchburg, Virginia. Expenses incurred as a result of your participation at the meeting (travel, meals and accommodations) will be reimbursed. A copy of the House Joint Resolution and agenda for the Task Force will follow.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact JoAnn M. Murray or Anthony G. Faina, Assistant Supervisor, Department of Education, Division of Special Education Support Services, P. O. Box 6Q, Richmond, Virginia 23216, Telephone 804/786-2673.

Sincerely,

Leslie W. Jones, Supervisor
Instructional Program Services

LWJ:plr

cc: Ms. JoAnn Murray
Anthony Faina
James T. Micklem

Task Force Members

Mrs. Lucile Anderson
Representative: VCASE
Supervisor of Special Education
Henrico County Public Schools

Dr. Frank Bowles
Representative: Coalition of Special Educators for
Personnel Preparation
Special Education Professor
Radford University

Mrs. Ruby Brown
EMR Teacher
Amherst County Schools

Ms. Judy Coffey
Representative: VEA
TMR Teacher
Richmond City Schools

Mr. Doug Cox
Regional Coordinator
Division of Special and Compensatory Education

Dr. Ada Hill
Representative: Coalition of Special Educators for
Personnel Preparation
Special Education Professor
Virginia Commonwealth University

Dr. Dorothy MacConkey
Representative: VARC
Vice President/Professor/Parent of TMR Child
George Mason University

Mr. Charles & Mrs. Freda McIver
Representative: VARC
Parents of EMR Child

Mr. Gene Moore
Representative: CEC
Teacher of EMR Children
Fairfax County

Ms. Ada Parashar
Representative: CEC
EMR Teacher
Powhatan County Public Schools

Dr. Edward Polloway
Representative: Coalition of Special Educators for
Personnel Preparation
Special Education Professor
Lynchburg College

Mrs. Craig Richards
Representative: VARC
Parent of EMR Child

Mrs. Betty Thweat
Representative: VCASE
Petersburg City Special Education Director

Mrs. Cathryn Williams
EMR Teacher
Amherst County Schools

EMR Task Force
July 10-11, 1980
Sheraton Inn
Rt. 29, Odd Fellows Rd. Exit
Lynchburg, Virginia
(804) 847-9041

Tentative Agenda

Thursday

- 10:00 a.m. Opening and Introduction
- 10:15 a.m. Purpose of Task Force
HJR - 129
- 10:45 a.m. Objectives
- 1) a. Study rate of reimbursement
b. Recommended new rate
 - 2) Determine appropriate class size
Advisability of teacher aides
- 11:00 a.m. Present results of ERIC Search;
Summary of nation-wide surveys of EMR programs
Pre-sent proposed case study (for Virginia school
divisions) and statewide survey
- 12:00 noon Lunch
- 1:15 p.m. Discussion of class size
- 2:30 p.m. Break
- 2:45 p.m. Discuss Aides
- 5:00 p.m. Discuss Reimbursement

Friday

- 9:00 a.m. Summarize previous discussions
Tentative Recommendations
Schedule Second Meeting
- 3:00 p.m. Adjourn

EMR Task Force Meeting
September 18-19, 1980
Bonhomme Richard Inn
Williamsburg, Virginia
(804) 220-1410

Tentative Agenda

Thursday, September 18

- 9:00 a.m. Opening
- 10:15 a.m. Comments from committee members regarding proposals from
initial meeting
- 11:00 a.m. Literature review findings
- 11:15 a.m. Discuss case study results
- 12:00 noon Lunch
- 1:15 p.m. Continue discussion of case study results
- 2:30 p.m. Break
- 2:45 p.m. Work on formalizing Task Force recommendations; divide
into 2 groups:
- 1) draft of rationale for reduction in pupil/teacher
ratio and advisability of classroom aides
 - 2) draft of funding recommendations
- 5:00 p.m. Dinner

Friday, September 19

- 9:00 a.m. Complete development of recommendations for Department of
Education
- 12:00 noon Lunch
- 1:00 -
3:00 p.m. Conclusion

EVALUATION

Task Force Meeting

Please circle the number which best expresses your reaction to each of the following items:

EVALUATION CRITERIA

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------|----------------|
| 1. The material provided prior to the meeting was pertinent to the purpose of the Task Force. | _____ Yes | _____ No |
| 2. Did you receive your information prior to the meeting? | _____ Yes | _____ No |
| 3. Were the facilities adequate? | _____ Yes | _____ No |
| 4. The organization of the meeting was: | Excellent
4 3 2 1 | Poor |
| 5. The objectives of the meeting were: | Clearly Evident
4 3 2 1 | Vague |
| 6. My attendance at this meeting should prove: | Very Beneficial
4 3 2 1 | Not Beneficial |
| 7. Overall, I consider this meeting: | Very Beneficial
4 3 2 1 | Not Beneficial |

List below the strengths of the task force meeting: _____

List below the weakness of the task force meeting: _____

What recommendations can you make for the next task force meeting: _____

APPENDIX C

Survey of States

1. Tabulation of Data from States
2. Sample Letters Sent to States

TABLE B

LB-Local Board S-Depends on Severity STATES	Secondary								Elementary							
	with aide				without aide				with aide				without aide			
	Self-contained	Resource	Itinerant	Non-categorical	Self-contained	Resource	Itinerant	Non-categorical	Self-contained	Resource	Itinerant	Non-categorical	Self-contained	Resource	Itinerant	Non-categorical
Alabama					15	20							15	20		
Alaska					15								15			
Arizona													LB			
Arkansas					15								15			
California					10								10			
Colorado					15	18							12	15		
Connecticut					12								12			
Delaware						15								15		
Florida					LB								LB			
Georgia ¹					18	24	20						14	24	20	
Hawaii					12	26							12	26		
Idaho	16	16			12	12			16	16			12	12		
Illinois					15	20							12	20		
Indiana																
Iowa					10	18							8	18		
Kansas	20				17								12			
Kentucky					10- 20								10- 20			
Louisiana									9- 17	9- 17						
Maine																
Maryland																
Massachusetts				12								12				
Michigan					18								18			
Minnesota ²					10								10			
Mississippi					15	20							15	20		
Missouri					20	20							15	15	20	
Montana					25								25			

LB-Local Board S-Depends on Severity STATES	Secondary								Elementary							
	with aide				without aide				with aide				without aide			
	Self-contained	Resource	Itinerant	Non-categorical	Self-contained	Resource	Itinerant	Non-categorical	Self-contained	Resource	Itinerant	Non-categorical	Self-contained	Resource	Itinerant	Non-categorical
Nebraska					16								16			
Nevada					12	24							12	24		
New Hampshire																
New Jersey					15								15			
New Mexico																
New York ³					18	20							15	20		
North Carolina	16	16							12	12						
North Dakota					10								10			
Ohio					22								18			
Oklahoma					15								15			
Oregon					LB								LB			
Pennsylvania					15	20	50						15	20	50	
Rhode Island																
South Carolina					18								15			
South Dakota					6								6			
Tennessee					LB								LB			
Texas					6								6			
Utah					15	32							15	32		
Vermont					15								15			
Virginia					16	24							16	24		
Washington	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
West Virginia	15				12	15			15				10	10		
Wisconsin					9.5								9.5			
Wyoming																

(Sent to 50 States)



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 60

RICHMOND, 23216

Dear

The Department of Education has been directed by the Virginia General Assembly to conduct studies regarding the teacher-pupil ratio in programs for the Educable Mentally Retarded and Speech Impaired children. Additionally, the issue of requiring teacher aides to be assigned to classes for the Educable Mentally Retarded is also under consideration.

Would you please provide this office pertinent information concerning:

- 1) the teacher-pupil ratio for the 1980-81 School Year in the programs for both the Speech Impaired and Educable Mentally Retarded;
- 2) State funding and methods for providing such aid to the localities;
- 3) the requirements related to the assignment of teacher aides to these programs; and
- 4) the certification standards applied to such personnel.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

Anthony G. Faina
Assistant Supervisor

JoAnn M. Murray
Administrative Intern
Division of Special Education
Support Services

AGF/JMM/pls

cc: James T. Micklem
Leslie W. Jones



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 60

RICHMOND, 23216

July 29, 1980

Dear

As per our letter of June 12, 1980, requesting information on teacher-pupil ratios, state funding, requirements and certification standards for teacher aides (see attached copy), the Department of Education is conducting a nationwide study of speech and EMR programs.

Unfortunately, we have not received any information regarding your programs to date. We would like to hear from you at your earliest convenience as you will enable us to gain closure on our project for the Virginia General Assembly.

Thank you for your interest in this monumental project.

Sincerely,

JoAnn M. Murray
Administrative Intern
Division of Special Education
Support Services

cc: Mr. James T. Micklem
Mr. Leslie W. Jones