

MIT 530
Evaluation and Change in Instructional Development
Special Education Records Meeting State Mandated Compliance

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Executive Summary

Cape Fear Center of Inquiry (CFCI) is a charter school in Wilmington, North Carolina which requires all children served through the Special Education or Exceptional Children (EC) program to be included in regular classroom settings at least eighty percent of the school day. Sixty-three EC students are currently enrolled in CFCI. Although a charter school, CFCI is required to follow all rules and regulations under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Special Education law requires 100% compliance of records, procedures, and processes however a recent audit of the records revealed that seventy-one percent were noncompliant. The high rate of noncompliance is unacceptable, putting students at risk for incorrect placement, and violating the law. Furthermore, federal funding could be pulled from the school for not meeting the mandates for compliance. A needs assessment was conducted by the TNA team to determine the causes of the lack of compliance of EC records and to recommend solutions.

The Needs Assessment Process was carried out in four phases: the planning phase, the data collection, the analyzing phase, and the reporting phase. During the planning phase, the TNA team planned the stages of the data gathering processes, the timeline for the processes as well as the details for the execution of the plan.

Data collection began with a preliminary interview and analysis of extant data. The extant data provided information from which the TNA team could identify the performance gap. To determine the *causes* of the performance gap, the TNA team selected the following data collection techniques and tools: survey for the general education teachers, interview with EC teachers, and a focus group with stakeholders. Data collection for the TNA commenced on Monday, February 27, 2006 and continued through Friday, March 10, 2006. Surveys were administered to twenty-one general education teachers with a return rate of 100%. During the data collection phase, information was gathered from the special education teachers, the general classroom teachers, EC Director Dr. Griffin, and a sample of parents. The information gathered included: attitudes concerning how the classroom teachers and the EC teachers felt about each other, EC teachers' skills for completing the records, and the classroom teachers' knowledge of the records with regards to their importance. In addition, information was gathered concerning the culture of the school with regard to state mandates, the attitudes of the special education teachers, general education teachers, the EC Director, and the parents toward compliance with the state mandates.

Once all data collection instruments were administered, the TNA team moved to the data analysis phase of the project. A comprehensive analysis of the data indicated that the cause of the problem; requiring top priority is the need to implement a structured, uninterrupted work time throughout the organization. Additional solutions, in order of priority, include: giving the EC Director Dr. Griffin an more active role in supporting EC teachers with the maintenance of EC records; instituting the peer-editing of records; administering a thirty-minute training to all staff, regarding the rigors and importance of 100% compliance of EC records.

Introduction

Dr. Lisa Griffin is also the Director of the school. The responsibilities associated with being the EC Director are one small component of Dr. Griffin's role. Upon initial consultation with Dr. Griffin it is apparent the culture of CFCI greatly influences the performance of the individuals. Reports by teachers indicate there are negative feelings towards the EC Program. During our preliminary interview, it was stated numerous times the teachers resent the special education program because they feel the mandates and guidelines give the EC teachers a perceived level of power. This perception impacts the process of completing the paperwork required in the EC records. Preliminary interviews also indicate it is imperative for the needs analysis to include the entire school context as well as the EC Program.

The EC Program consists of the EC Director; the EC Coordinator, who is responsible for managing the records and reporting to the state; and two EC teachers whose primary responsibilities are instructional. The EC Coordinator position carries an unspoken or "perceived" leadership role yet no actual authority over EC Team members. All Special Educators serve as student case managers and are required to complete and manage the student confidential records. The caseload for each EC teacher is on average twenty students.

The EC teachers have Special Education degrees, the appropriate certifications, and are considered "highly qualified" by the state. Based on the results of the initial interview, there does not appear to be a gap in knowledge and skills needed to properly complete the Special Education records. Furthermore there does not appear to be a gap in knowledge and skills needed to follow procedures for properly implementing the specifications of Special Education law.

Resources for the organization are as follows. The EC Director acts as a liaison to the Board of Directors therefore her support is crucial to the EC Team's success. The EC team has one Regional Consultant assigned to them from the NCDPI. The EC Program writes and obtains a federal grant each year for approximately thirty to forty thousand dollars. The grant may be used for contracted salaries if necessary. Parents are a large part of the CFCI community and could be utilized as a resource if necessary and appropriate. The EC Team communicates effectively and has a good working relationship. They meet every Friday morning to help facilitate effective communication.

The constraints for the organization are as follows.

- Time is a large constraint at CFCI. Due to the nature of the organization, the staff members have various unstated and unwritten roles and responsibilities.
- The culture of CFCI is multifaceted and is an important variable in analyzing any organizational problem. Preliminary interviews indicate the needs assessment process may focus a good deal on the culture of the organization. For example, frequent interruptions, lack of structural support, too much flexibility, and autonomy for each teacher are aspects of the culture, which may impact the problem. The negative attitudes from the general education teachers toward the EC team impact the efficacy of EC team.
- All three EC teachers do not value the accurate compliance of IEP paperwork.
- Dr. Lisa Griffin holds an actual authoritative role over the team and any teacher who serves EC students. Some staff members in the organization do not recognize, nor perceive her as a supervisory or authority figure.

The purpose of the needs assessment is to formulate a solution to the percentage of records currently noncompliant. Sixty-three EC students are currently enrolled in CFCI. The self-audit indicated five out of seven records were found to be non-compliant. At seventy-one percent, this non-compliant percentage of is significantly too high. Special Education law, contained in the 2005 reauthorization of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), requires 100% compliance of records, procedures, and processes. The low rate of compliance not only puts students at risk for incorrect placement, but also is against the law. The IEP record is intended to clearly reflect an in-depth description of the student's educational programming. It is analogous to a patient's medical chart. It is pivotal the paperwork reflects all aspects of the student's educational programming accurately and concisely. Federal funding could be pulled from the school for not meeting the mandates for compliance.

The needs assessment relied on extant data; opinions, feelings, and attitudes gathered through interviews; a survey; and a focus group. Results of the systematic assessment provided information for all five purposes; optimal, actual, feelings, causes, and solutions. The consulting team analyzed the data in order to discover the causes of the problem and to make recommendations for solving the problem.

Needs Assessment Process

The object of the needs assessment was to determine the cause of the lack of compliance of the special needs student folders. In order to identify the causes of the problem and in order to recommend solutions Allison Rossett's Training Needs Assessment model was used.

The model consisted of four phases: the planning phase, the data collection phase, the analyzing phase, and the report phase. During the planning phase the team planned the stages and the timeline of the data gathering processes. The details for the execution of the plan such as: participants, development of the instruments, and analysis methods were also considered. During the planning phase all necessary documents were compiled to order to provide information needed for the contextual analysis.

Then the team selected data collection techniques and tools: extant data collection, a survey for the general education teachers, an interview with EC teachers, and a focus group. Based on the problem and extant data analysis, qualitative data would provide the necessary information for effective problem identification and solution. In order to analyze attitudes towards the EC program and state mandated paperwork a survey was developed. Because attitude was a primary focus a Likert scale was chosen for the survey questions. The survey items were developed based on contextual analysis, extant data analysis, and content analysis. Several interview questions were designed for the Special Education teachers. The primary focus of the questions was to understand their knowledge, their skills, and their attitudes with relation to proper completion of paperwork. Questions varied from specific to open-ended. Following a Rossett Model the focus group questions were tailored to the project's specific context and problem.

The information gathered included: attitudes concerning how the classroom teachers and the special education teachers feel about each other, the special education teachers' skills for completing the folders and the classroom teachers' knowledge of the folders with regards to their importance. In addition, further information was gathered concerning the culture of the school, the attitudes of the special education teachers, and the parents' attitudes regarding the compliance with the state mandates.

Once a draft of each instrument was developed a sample of the test population evaluated the instruments' validity. Necessary revisions were made as needed. Data collection for the TNA commenced on Monday, February 27, 2006 and continued until Friday, March 10, 2006. During this time, information from the special education teachers, the general classroom teachers, Dr. Griffin, and a sample of the parents was gathered.

Each instrument was distributed and/or administered as scheduled. During this phase, each data collection instrument was administered sequentially although the data collection of each phase was not dependent upon the previous phase. Once all data collection instruments were administered the team moved to the data analysis phase of the project.

The team leader for this project was Renee Corcoran. Her primary role was to supervise team productivity. Renee also facilitated team meetings and monitored timely completion of work. In order to maintain specific checkpoints, she divided the completion of the project reports into manageable segments. Additionally, Renee was responsible for processing the data collected and generating quantitative results for subsequent interpretation. The team leader served as the liaison between the team members and the client contacts.

The team recorder was Suesan Sullivan. Suesan's responsibilities included documenting important details of team meetings, compiling meeting notes and distributing summaries through

email. She transcribed and distributed the focus group interview to team members. Lastly she was responsible for ensuring all proper sections of the reports are included.

The team researcher was Trisha Torkildsen. Trisha's primary responsibilities were to gather extant data for team analysis, administer surveys, schedule the focus group session, and schedule the initial interview with the client stakeholders. Trisha also gathered descriptive data regarding the client context and environment.

The team editor was Michele Moore. Michele acted as the lead writer for the team. Her primary responsibilities were to read and edit the report for continuity and mechanics for the final submission. She reviewed and ensured all content corresponded with requirements.

The following activities were completed as a team:

- Preliminary interview
- Extant Data Analysis
- Stakeholder interviews
- Creation of data collection tools
- Interpretation of survey results
- Conduct focus group session
- Interpretation of findings
- Prioritization of possible solutions
- Discussion of recommendations based on prioritization

Data Collection

Stage I Instrument: Extant Data Analysis

Following a preliminary interview an extant data analysis was conducted. The purpose of the extant data analysis was to gather more specific information on the current situation, “what is” and to provide the team with an understanding of “what should be”. Thus providing the team the information needed to see the performance gap. The team conducted a content analysis using various documents provided by the organization directly related to the problem. The team reviewed audit records from a previous self-audit of CFCI’s special education confidential files and an anonymous example of a confidential record. In addition, a review of the state requirements of the Continuous Improvement Focused Monitoring System (CIFMS) was used to provide the team with the “rigorous and measurable benchmarks” expected by NCDPI and the optimal.

Content analysis and observation provided a picture of how the teachers were frequently interrupted by others within the organization and clarified the organizational environment. The review of the state mandates offered the optimal performance of the organization. In addition, the state mandates were written in the measurable terms, which the organization needed to follow in order to receive funding from the state government.

Stage II Instrument: General Education Survey

The team created and distributed a survey to all regular classroom teachers and specialists, including all instructional staff with the exception of the EC teachers. The one-page survey was designed to gather information concerning the school’s culture, the effects the culture has on the Special Education Teachers’ compliance of the folders, and the general education teachers’ feelings toward the Special Education Department. In order to gather this data a series of ten questions was included using a five point Likert scale rating system for each questions. Two pieces of demographic information were included; years taught and grade level taught, in order to examine a possible correlation. The survey included a prompt for additional comments. The surveys were distributed to the twenty-one general education teachers. Support from Dr. Griffin was integral in ensuring 100% of the surveys were returned and completed. Based on historical data, if the survey did not state, “**Must** be returned” many of the survey participants would not comply. Therefore, the tone of the teacher survey was recommended and guided by the school director. One hundred percent of the surveys were returned by the time required.

Once all of the surveys were returned, the data was entered into Excel and then the survey data was inserted into a statistical analysis computer application, SPSS. Upon entering the data into SPSS, areas were analyzed for further analysis or investigation. A blended method of analysis was utilized on the surveys; the response data was quantified as well as evaluated qualitatively. The statistical frequency table was analyzed.

The most valuable and utilized measure was the mode. Questions indicating a higher number of respondents answered in the same manner were analyzed to determine if the common responses were significant to the problem. The measures of central tendency were fairly evenly distributed. Therefore, the responses were also analyzed qualitatively as well. The respondent comments added to the surveys served as valuable information.

The results of the surveys were contradictory in that the EC teachers are frequently interrupted during their planning periods. Other teachers or personnel do not hesitate to interrupt while confidential IEP meetings are being conducted. A correlation test was conducted between a teacher’s length of service and agreement with the statement concerning the value of the

paperwork the EC teachers must complete. The correlation was run to see if the teachers with more experience valued the paperwork more or less. The correlation test was completed by comparing the length of service and the value placed on the accurate completion of the paperwork with the employees of CFCI. The test showed only a slight to moderate negative correlation between length of service and value of completed paperwork. The negative correlation means as the teachers' length of service increased their value of the completion paperwork decreased.

Based on the results of the data analysis of the surveys, the employees of CFCI view the paperwork the EC Teachers complete as important. In addition, the survey showed where more than 90% of the employees felt it was important for the EC Teachers to have uninterrupted time during their planning periods to complete their paperwork. However, attitudes that were prevalent in the comments were "I don't believe that anyone in this building can get an "uninterrupted" planning time." The conclusion is that although the respondents view the uninterrupted time as time as important, the cultural norm was established that this problem is an accepted part of the culture. (*See Appendix I*)

Stage III Instrument: Special Education Interviews

The third stage of the data collection process was an interview with the three EC teachers. The purpose of the interviews was to provide information concerning attitudes of the EC teachers with regards to state mandates, to general education teachers, and to record keeping. In addition, information was collected about their current performance. The interview questions focused on the attitudes of the EC Teachers and their feelings towards the compliance mandate. The questions varied in that some questions focused on specific answers such as "how much time do you spend on paperwork each week." While some questions were designed to intentionally elicit open-ended responses such as "what hinders you from having adequate time to complete your paperwork." The interviews yielded many responses allowing for an extensive qualitative analysis.

The EC Teachers had varying opinions concerning the procedures of their paperwork and the importance of the paperwork with their positions at CFCI. One of the teachers felt the paperwork was irrelevant in serving the students, another felt the paperwork helped to better serve the students and the other EC Teacher was willing to complete the paperwork because she realized it was part of her job.

Comparisons were made between the Special Education teacher's responses and those of the general educators. The most glaring pattern and similarity that emerged was that the Special Educators also indicated that, frequent interruptions during planning time is a hindrance but is an accepted part of the organizational culture.

Stage IV Instrument: Focus Group

The final data collection tool was the focus group interview process. The focus group members included: three special educators, a general educator, Dr. Griffin, an Occupational Therapist and a parent. The group participants were determined based on their roles within the CFCI system. The purpose of the focus group was to provide triangulation of the data through the stakeholders. Organizational stakeholders not represented in the other data collection stages were included in the focus group. All previous data collection instruments were analyzed following each collection phase. Each instrument, tool or technique revealed specific information was extrapolated to reveal potential solutions to the performance problem. The focus group

interview questions were specifically designed to be open-ended questions to allow stakeholders to speak frankly about the context and performance problem. The questions were designed to further investigate a perspective of the problem that other data collection instruments did not explore.

One TNA team member conducted the focus group interview. The focus group was tape recorded to help ensure accuracy in capturing the comments. Concluding the focus group interview the tape was given to the team recorder. The team recorder transcribed and distributed all responses. All team members reviewed the responses for qualitative information. The team members extrapolated out important pieces of data to share and discuss. Again, the data was compared with results of the previous instruments in order to detect a clear cause of the problem.

Through the focus groups, participants revealed there was little concern with the state mandates or deadlines because the state enforcement of the mandates lacks accountability. In addition, the parent of the group concurred their primary concern is that their children receive the education proscribed by the paperwork.

The focus group also revealed teachers feel frequent interruptions are a clear hindrance on their accurate completion of their paperwork due to a lack of concentration and “being pulled in so many different directions”. The stakeholders also revealed they do feel as if the frequent mistakes impact the system in several ways. If you make mistakes you will eventually have to fix them, which entails a lengthy “corrective action” process. Some mistakes can affect the implementation of a child’s educational programming, which is clearly unacceptable. Records are also sent to other schools. If there is a glaring mistake it can and will negatively impact the view of the competency of the Special Educators at CFCI. Finally, if any one of five “payback” issues is discovered in a file the organization will lose funding for the child. This would be detrimental to a financially dependent charter school.

The focus group data matched the interview data, the survey data, and the extant data that was collected. The data was thoroughly triangulated during analysis.

Recommendations

The Training Needs Analysis team collected and analyzed data collected from extant data and three instruments:

1. Survey administered to general education instructional staff with a return rate of 100%.
2. Interviews with the EC teachers.
3. Focus Group conducted with EC teachers, a regular education teacher, and Occupational Therapist, the school director and a parent.

Data revealed the primary obstacle preventing teachers from meeting 100% compliance with state mandates was the lack of uninterrupted time during the day. This prohibited them to focus on the detailed and abundant task of completing EC paperwork with accuracy. One EC Teacher commented, *“When I find that I’ve made a mistake, I’m surprised that I made it. But I think it comes down to paying attention to details of what I’m supposed to be doing, which entails frequent interruptions. Having three things going on at one time, students, teachers, parents, phone ringing, all at once, I cannot pay attention to minute details with that going on. I’d be more effective taking it home, but we can’t. It’s a Catch 22.”*

One focus group participant recalled working in a school system where teachers were allowed to take EC records home, and she had this to say: *“I would go into a room and have complete quiet. I was more efficient there than I am here because of that. Typically here at an IEP meeting I don’t hand paperwork to a parent. In the past I did because I felt pretty confident things were in place. Because now I will go back and look and sometimes I will find a mistake and think, Oh my gosh, how did I ever do that? So it is easy to make mistakes in this environment because there are interruptions, and we’re pulled in so many directions.”*

Taking EC records out of the building is not allowed. EC teachers are required to complete the paperwork in an environment where frequent interruptions are the norm. Survey results concur frequent interruption and “forced multitasking” is a cultural norm for this organization. Data revealed a shared opinion among EC teachers, with regard to paperwork, working more efficiently and effectively the first time is the key. Having to take corrective action is time consuming and in some cases, can become a *“logistical nightmare.”*

An additional obstacle to the accuracy of paperwork was the lack of an editor or so-called “second pair of eyes” to audit the work. Several respondents commented on this issue:

- *“It’s good to have someone else look over your records because if you look over your own record, you may overlook something that you did.”*
- *“Never edit your own work.”*
- *“Have someone else check your work because what you’re seeing is what’s in your head not in reality.”*

Discussed during the focus group was the idea of establishing a peer editing system. It was deemed highly valuable via a number of examples, shared by the participants.

Another example of inefficiency revealed the challenges EC teachers face during IEP meetings. EC teachers responsibilities included serving as team leader, case manager, meeting facilitator, recorder, and parent comforter all at once. Within IEP meetings, the EC teacher was the liaison between the parents and the professionals, which included occupational therapists, speech therapists, counselors, a school psychologist and classroom teachers. Not only did EC teachers make parents feel comfortable with the special education services their child received, they were required to *“cross their T’s dot their I’s,”* and to compose written objectives on the spot. At times during this demanding process, parents became emotional and defensive. This can

impact the teacher's accuracy. The data supported the opinion IEP meetings should be structured with additional professional support. For example, the Local Education Agency Representative generally does not need to play an active role in the meeting. They could assist the Special Educator by filling in on one of their many roles during a meeting, when appropriate. This would ensure more efficient and accurate recording of information, which ultimately is reflected in EC paperwork compliance.

According to the value respondents placed on EC paperwork, the results were confounding to the TNA team. Data from the survey indicated 90% of CFCI employees agreed in the importance for EC teachers to have uninterrupted time during their planning periods to complete their paperwork, yet the interviews and focus group data revealed planning periods for EC teachers were interrupted on a constant basis.

Survey comments, from regular classroom teachers, such as "I have to take my work home, why can't the EC Teachers?" revealed regular classroom teachers do not truly value the dilemma of EC teachers, whereby EC teachers are prohibited from taking EC files out of the building.

Data also revealed a motivational factor. The stakeholders do not agree noncompliance with state mandates may result in repercussions. If a mistake is found in any confidential folder, the teacher has one year to take corrective action. No menacing consequences are in place to affect change with due speed.

Therefore possibly a brief, thirty minute training can be conducted in conjunction with one or more of the following proposed solutions. This informal, yet concise training session could reiterate the following to the organizations stakeholders:

- Importance of accuracy in EC paperwork
- State mandated expectations
- Causes-as discovered through TNA
- Solution implementations-recommendations based on TNA

A compilation of data analysis revealed the cause of the problem that required priority was the need for interrupted planning time. However, a comprehensive analysis also indicated the subsequent findings or additional causes also impact the problem a good deal.

(See Table 1 for Prioritization of Finding and Recommendations)

Table 1

Prioritization of Finding and Recommendations

	Pros	Cons	Constraint	Alignment with organizational values	Prioritizations of solution 1-4 1 = highest priority
Proposed Solution					
Implementation of a structured uninterrupted work time throughout organization	+efficiency +accuracy reduce errors + = increase	-lack of buy in due to culture of organization -viewed as a large change?	-transfer and implementation -support from director -CFI staff members have too many roles	-seems so imbedded in the culture -costs no money -everyone “desires”	1
Peer-editing of records	-Catch errors +awareness decrease -chance of payback issues	+time +resentment if someone has many errors -does not increase uninterrupted work time	Time is already identified as a major constraint, major cause of the problem	-team may view as more work = more time -costs no output of funds -value peer editing over outside editing	3
LEA Rep. (Dr. Griffin) given an active role	-decrease workload on Sp. Ed. Teacher -assists in efficacy and accuracy of Sp. Ed. Teacher	-does not increase uninterrupted work time	-Dr. Griffin-not trained in areas of Sp. Ed. -due to other duties, not always present during entire meeting -Dr. Griffin may not agree to this role	-highly value on peer support and collaboration -doesn't cost any money	2
Thirty minute training	+buy in -more effective	-not a solution in and of itself	-time is commodity	-value educating one another	4-in conjunction

Appendix A

Below is the status of the information needed to complete the Training Needs Assessment (TNA).

TNA Planner		
Description	Status	Sources
Optimals	Have all information, state mandate	Handbook, mandated by the state
Actuals	Need more information	Extant data, Special Education Teachers
Feelings	Need more information	Special Education Teachers, General Education Teachers, pseudo-Administration, Parents
Causes	Need more information	Special Education Teachers, General Education Teachers, pseudo-Administration
Solutions	Need more information	Special Education Teachers, General Classroom Teachers, pseudo-Administration, Parents

Appendix B

TNA Stage Planner

Stage NO. 1

1. Subject of TNA: Lack of compliance of special education folders to the state mandates.
2. Summary of what you already know about the subject
 - We have little information as to why the folders do not meet compliance.
3. Summary of information being sought during this stage
 - The information we would like to collect during this phase is performance of the employees and the process by which the folders are created and maintained.
4. Who or what are the sources of information for this stage?
 - The sources of information for this stage are Special Education Teachers, student records and Dr. Griffin.
5. What TNA tools will be used to carry out this stage?
 - Extant Data Analysis
6. If you will be interviewing or surveying, what questions will you ask? If you will be observing, what will you be observing, what will you be watching? If you will be using a group meeting, what is your agenda?
 - N/A

Appendix C

TNA Stage Planner

Stage NO. 2

1. Subject of TNA: Lack of compliance of special education folders to the state mandates.
2. Summary of what you already know about the subject
 - We have little information as to why the folders do not meet compliance.
 - We have the optimal from the state mandate.
 - We have the percentage of folders in compliance.
3. Summary of information being sought during this stage
 - We would like to know more about the culture of this school.
 - Want to know if culture affects the Special Education Teachers' compliance of the folders.
 - We are looking to find out feelings toward the Special Education Department.
4. Who or what are the sources of information for this stage?
 - The sources of information for this stage are General Education Teachers.
5. What TNA tools will be used to carry out this stage?
 - Survey
6. If you will be interviewing or surveying, what questions will you ask? If you will be observing, what will you be observing, what will you be watching? If you will be using a group meeting, what is your agenda?
 - Survey the General Education Teachers to determine attitudes towards the Special Education Teachers and feelings towards the mandates from the state.
 - Identify possible cause(s) of the problem

Appendix D

TNA Stage Planner

Stage NO. 3

1. Subject of TNA: Lack of compliance of special education folders to the state mandates.
2. Summary of what you already know about the subject
 - We have little information as to why the folders do not meet compliance.
 - We have the optimal from the state mandate.
 - We have the percentage of folders in compliance.
3. Summary of information being sought during this stage
 - We would like to know more about the attitudes of the Special Education Teachers towards the state mandates, general education teachers and record keeping.
 - We are looking to find out feelings toward the state mandates.
 - To find out what the Special Education Teachers are actually doing.
4. Who or what are the sources of information for this stage?
 - The sources of information for this stage are Special Education Teachers.
5. What TNA tools will be used to carry out this stage?
 - Interview
6. If you will be interviewing or surveying, what questions will you ask? If you will be observing, what will you be observing, what will you be watching? If you will be using a group meeting, what is your agenda?
 - Interview Special Education Teachers to determine their feelings and attitudes towards the compliance mandate
 - Ask Special Education Teachers about their perspective on record keeping
 - Ask Special Education Teachers about their method(s) for creating a folder
 - Interview to get a feel of the teachers' personalities
 - Interview to find out if they are familiar with the policies and their consequences surrounding the state mandate

Appendix E

TNA Stage Planner

Stage NO. 4

1. Subject of TNA: Lack of compliance of special education folders to the state mandates.
2. Summary of what you already know about the subject
 - We have little information as to why the folders do not meet compliance.
3. Summary of information being sought during this stage
 - Verification of previously collected data.
 - Validation of previously collected data.
 - Feelings towards the non-compliance issue
4. Who or what are the sources of information for this stage?
 - The sources of information for this stage are General Education Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Parents, and Dr. Griffin.
5. What TNA tools will be used to carry out this stage?
 - Focus Group
6. If you will be interviewing or surveying, what questions will you ask? If you will be observing, what will you be observing, what will you be watching? If you will be using a group meeting, what is your agenda?
 - Interview to discuss feelings towards the compliance issue.
 - Interview to discuss the culture of the school.
 - Interview to determine if they are familiar with the policies and consequences for non-compliance.
 - Collect information as to how they feel are possible solutions.

Appendix F
General Education Survey

Teachers,

In an effort to help ensure that we are providing the most effective services possible for our students we must look at all aspects of programming for special education students.

As an *inclusionary* school you all are involved in these processes a good deal. Please help us to determine how we can improve this process by completing the following survey.

We are looking at ways to improve the EC Program and your opinions are highly valued. Return it to Dr. Lisa Griffin's box by Friday March 3rd. Contact Dr. Griffin with any question about the survey.

All responses are confidential and you have complete anonymity

Thank you very much for you time,

Read the question and check the box with your response:

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Special Education and the implementation of IDEA are governed by federal/state mandates, procedures and processes that are beyond the LEA's control.					
2. The paperwork that the EC Teachers must complete is a valuable aspect of educational programming					
3. EC Teachers should take home their IEPs to work on them if they need to					
4. It is important for the EC Teachers to have an uninterrupted planning period to complete paperwork					
5. EC Teachers have more time in their day to work on paperwork than classroom teachers do					
6. I am knowledgeable enough in the IEP Processes to "assist" in completion of the paperwork					
7. Extra duties (committees, meetings, etc.) that occur at CFCI hinder me from having the time I need to effectively					

complete "housekeeping" things (paperwork, attendance, daily tasks that have to get one)					
8. Having a high % of special education students is beneficial to our school community					
9. I enjoy the process of collaboration with special educators					
10. It can take up to 2 hours to properly write an IEP					

What grade(s) do you teach? K -1 2-3 4-5 6 7 8 Specialist

How many years have you been teaching? _____

*****Please add any additional comments about survey subject on back of sheet*****

00

Appendix G

Interview Topics for the Special Education Teachers

I. Introduction

Background

- Explain who we are: MIT students completing a needs assessment, concerned with state mandates of student files
- Explain the purpose of the project:
 1. Help EC teachers to have 100% compliance of the state mandates
 2. Need to have compliance of the folders
- Interview:
 1. Need to know your feelings towards this topic
 2. Need to know what the processes are currently in the school
 3. The interview should not take more than 30-60 minutes

II. Body of Interview

Feelings

- How do you feel about state mandates?
- How do you feel about record keeping?
- How do you feel about the compliance issue mandated by the state for 100% compliance of student records?
- Do you feel that compliance of the students' records is important?
- How do you see the completion of paperwork fitting into your job roles and responsibilities?

Current Activity

- How do you currently create the folders?
- What is your process for updating the students' folders?
- When you have a meeting how do you input the information into the student's folder?
- When you have new paperwork for a student, what do you first do with it?
- Can you show me how you create a folder?
- Can you show me how you would update a folder?
- How much time is currently allocated in your weekly schedule to complete paperwork?
- How much time per week do you spend completing/working on paperwork?
- What hinders you from having adequate time to properly complete your paperwork?

Information

- Are you familiar with the consequences for folders out of compliance?
- How do you feel about the folders out of compliance?
- Are you concerned with the possibility that the state could remove the funds provided for the student for each folder out of compliance?
- Do you think the state will ever pull funds from CFCI for non-compliance?

III. Conclusion

- Ask for questions or comments
- Summarize the meeting thoughts
- Thank you very much for time and for your thoughts which are very important and will help with this project

Appendix H

Focus Group Questions

I. Introduction

Background

- Explain who we are: MIT students completing a needs assessment, concerned with state mandates of student files
- Explain the purpose of the project:
 1. Help EC teachers to have 100% compliance of the state mandates
 2. Need to have compliance of the folders
- Interview:
 1. Interested in the atmosphere of the school
 2. Interested in the current knowledge about the EC process
 3. The interview should not take more than 30-60 minutes

II. Body of Interview

Knowledge

- Do you know about the state mandates for EC children?
- Are you aware of the lack of compliance with EC files and state mandates of the folders out of compliance?
- Are you concerned with the discrepancy of the folders and the state mandates?

Feelings

- How would you feel if the state removed the funding per child per offense?
- Do you think it would impact your child's experiences at CFCI if the funding were removed?
- How do you feel about the EC teachers at CFCI?

III. Conclusion

- Ask for questions or comments
- Summarize the meeting thoughts
- Thank you very much for time and for your thoughts which are very important and will help with this project

**Appendix I
Survey Result Statistics**

Frequencies

Statistics

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
N	20	21	21	21	21	21	21	19	21	21
Valid	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Missing	4.3500	4.1429	2.9048	4.1429	2.8095	2.9524	3.2381	2.3158	4.4762	4.0000
Mean	4.5000	4.0000	3.0000	4.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	2.0000	4.0000	4.0000
Median	5.00	4.00	2.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	2.00	4.00	4.00
Mode	.74516	.85356	1.44585	.91026	.98077	1.24403	1.09109	.88523	.51177	.77460
Std. Deviation	.555	.729	2.090	.829	.962	1.548	1.190	.784	.262	.600
Variance	2.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	1.00	2.00
Range	3.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	4.00	3.00
Minimum	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	5.00	5.00
Maximum										