

**Charter Schools  
Serving Students with Disabilities**

***A Vision for a New Way***

**A Concept Paper Promoting Leadership  
& Commitment to Children**

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**Presented by the Michigan Association of Public School Academies  
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# Charter Schools Serving Students with Disabilities

## “A Vision for a New Way”

### Introduction

Charter schools, or public school academies (PSAs), have operated in Michigan since 1994. Started as an option for parents and an opportunity for innovation in the provision of education, these schools have enjoyed much success and weathered much criticism.

It is human nature to accept and rely on what is known and to be suspect of new thinking or actions. In contrast, it also is human to envision a better way of accomplishing a goal. A free society offers opportunity for change and celebrates those individuals with the vision and courage to devise alternative systems.

During the past several decades, a system of providing education to children and youth with disabilities has emerged and is still evolving. The special education system is rooted in state and federal law assuring this population of students a free, appropriate, and public education.

As local public schools, charters are obligated to offer this free, appropriate, and public education. Unfortunately, the system is characterized by excessive regulation and paperwork, as well as procedures that often have more to do with regulatory compliance than with meeting the individual needs of children.

While charter schools embrace innovation and are built with a passion for providing a high-quality education, some of these new schools did not anticipate having to accommodate a complex bureaucracy and numerous regulations in servicing students with disabilities. Consequently, some PSAs have struggled to access this complicated system, to work within it and most importantly, to balance compliance with the best possible services for children and the pursuit of innovations that offer parents the options they so desperately seek.

Significantly, a number of charter schools in Michigan and across the nation are effectively addressing the challenges and becoming models of excellence for serving all children, including those with disabilities. In fact, some education experts, teachers and parents firmly believe the future of “special education” is being unveiled in charter schools.

### **As a result, the Michigan Association of Public School Academies has developed this position paper with five objectives:**

- 1) Providing guidance for the provision of quality educational opportunities for all students, including those with disabilities;
- 2) Encouraging development of model programs;
- 3) Paving the way for ongoing research and dissemination of effective practices spearheaded in charter schools, or available for charter use, in serving students with disabilities;
- 4) Reinforcing what charter schools should be doing pursuant to federal and state law in serving students with disabilities; and
- 5) Responding to critics regarding PSA provision of service to children with disabilities.

## **History of Charter Schools**

In 1993, Michigan enacted a charter school law and became the ninth state to join the movement. The law originally was part of a larger educational reform package, including Proposal A and Schools of Choice, but passed as a single law, P.A. 362, in 1993.

In 1994, a lawsuit was filed in Ingham Circuit Court claiming charters were not public schools and were therefore private schools. In October that year, the trial court issued a preliminary injunction preventing the Department of Treasury from issuing state aid payments to any of eight existing PSAs. A month later, the court declared the charter act unconstitutional and the eight schools were forced to operate under their intermediate school districts until the law was rewritten. Legislators did that in December, and funding was available for 12 schools.

Parent demand for choice was high, and in fall 1995, 31 new schools opened. In March 1996, the Michigan Court of Appeals upheld the Circuit Court's decision that the law was unconstitutional, but in July 1997, the Michigan Supreme Court overturned the decision. At that time, Revised School Code P.A. 289 of 1995 became the official law for charter public schools.

The formation of new charter schools requires intensive work. A massive, detailed "charter" or contract, including performance commitments, must be secured from an authorizer. Curriculum, policies and approaches to education must be identified. A building must be located, renovated or built — often with totally private start-up funding and the first state aid not arriving until October. Teachers, administrators and staff must be hired. And of course, students need to enroll.

Despite the hurdles, the charter movement has grown dramatically, as is seen below:

<b>Year</b>	<b># of Schools</b>	<b>Percentage Increase</b>	<b># of Students</b>	<b>Percentage Increase</b>
94-95	12		1,200	
95-96	43	258%	5,250	338%
96-97	79	83%	12,500	138%
97-98	108	37%	20,500	64%
98-99	138	28%	32,500	59%
99-2000	173	25%	47,500	46%
00-01	185	7%	57,500	21%
01-02	189	2%	65,000	13%
02-03	190	.5%	69,000	6%

The 1995 legislation put a cap on the number of charter schools — 150 — that could be authorized by state universities. That number was reached in 1999; the remaining few charter schools are authorized by intermediate school districts, community colleges and local school districts. Legislation is pending to increase the number of schools universities can authorize.

## **History of Special Education**

Prior to 1971, special education in Michigan was permissive, meaning a school district could provide programs for children with disabilities but was not required to do so by state law or federal regulation. Most programs were in more metropolitan areas where a larger population base existed and where funds were obtained more easily.

The history of special education shows programs initially were sought for children with physical disabilities — deaf, blind, severely cognitively impaired — as evidenced by creation of State Schools for the Deaf and Blind as well as some program options in state mental hospitals.

In the mid to late 1960s, a movement started to assure provision of special education programs and services for all Michigan children with disabilities. The primary goal was to secure services for children who were not allowed in school and were kept home.

This movement led to Michigan's mandatory special education law, P.A. 198 of 1971. With passage of this law and its accompanying rules, children could be determined eligible for programs and services. Local school districts, working with the 57 intermediate school districts (ISDs), were deemed responsible to see that all children with certifiable disabilities were found, evaluated and provided with the programs and services needed to attain their maximum potential. Funds were allocated by the Michigan Legislature, and the ISDs were permitted to levy a tax especially for provision of special education.

The mandatory laws made it possible for a huge population of children with disabilities to enter schools and access this newly required option called special education. Many of these children had what are commonly referred to as high-incidence disabilities and were labeled learning disabled, speech and language impaired, emotionally disturbed, and educable mentally impaired. These children had not found success in the regular classroom because their development was not aligned with the developmental expectations for various grades.

The special education system developed in the 1970s is based on the identification of children (determining eligibility for services) and the assignment of students to a variety of specialists who attempt to meet their needs and focus on agreed goals. Early efforts at legislating special education were simple compared to today, and became the base for a system that ballooned into hundreds of federal and state laws and rules that reinforce a disconnect from general education. This disconnect is known as the pull-out model, with children removed from the regular education environment and served in a special education categorical classroom for the learning disabled, emotionally impaired, and the educable mentally impaired.

In the 1980s, the resource room concept was implemented, which brought children of various disabilities to a central place for instruction. Even children whose main learning problem was failure to read commensurate with peers, or those not developmentally in sync with the majority in the graded system, were placed in these rooms. In the 1990s, the concept of inclusion became a popular replacement for pull-out programs. Many districts instituted co- and team-teaching programs as administrators and teachers saw that cooperation between educators and a pooling of resources was more beneficial than removing children from their peers.

The special education system that was designed to bring equality of education to children with disabilities actually, in many cases, disenfranchised them from the general education classroom. The system allows the general education teacher and administrator to place those children who are not meeting standard developmental expectations with an educator or therapist trained to address their educational needs. This is reinforced as high-stakes testing causes districts to compete for public approval, as MEAP scores are made public, and as schools are evaluated and held accountable for effective educational practices.

It is important to note that special education is often the only means of service for children struggling to learn. Data showing the disproportionate number of minorities in special education programs give evidence of this reality. Further, parents often are led to believe the only way their child can receive services is by becoming "eligible" and labeled for special education. As a result, even though a child simply may need extra help learning to read and truly may not be eligible according to special education rule, the parent — and sometimes the school district — acquiesce so something can be done for the child. That something has been "special education," which often has meant moving to a resource room where a teacher is be responsible for children with a wide variety of disabilities and has little time for individual attention.

With the special education system wrapped in a bureaucratic cloak, excessive paperwork has become the price to pay for years of mismanaged practices. Some children are mislabeled, poorly diagnosed, placed in separate facilities and taught by untrained teachers, to name a few unfortunate practices. To counter these and protect children, the government has developed laws, rules and myriad accompanying forms, meetings, and notices. To ensure compliance, formal monitoring mechanisms have been created. The system requires an inordinate amount of time if schools are to meet and document actions, decisions, and plans for serving each child.

Add to that the threat of complaints and hearings to contest decisions, and the system has become captive to bureaucracy. The original intent of the special education movement — to provide disenfranchised children with a high-quality education — has been lost.

What has been created is not a program of prevention, remediation and assimilation, but a system of determining eligibility, labeling, removal from general education classrooms, minimal service, and excessive paperwork. Teachers often are frustrated with the inordinate amount of time necessary to be in compliance, as opposed to the time spent meeting the unique educational needs of children.

What's more, the cost effectiveness of this inadequate system is troubling. Large sums have become necessary for funding administrators, lawyers, hearing officers, consultants, lobbyists and others who implement, defend, explain, and document actions. ISD taxes, school taxes, federal funds, and state dollars often are inadequate, with costs often more than doubling when students move from regular to special education.

In a recent study, 84 percent of school leaders say they spend too much time on special education. For more than the past 10 years, repeated lawsuits between local schools and the State of Michigan and a long debate in Congress have reinforced that special education expenditures are the leading financial dilemma for school leaders.

The number of Michigan students labeled as needing special education grows annually. In 1975, special education children numbered 147,441 out of more than 2 million students. In 1990, the number of children labeled as disabled was 172,738 out of 1.6 million. In 2001, the last date for which data is available, 232,414 special education students came from a total 1.7 million children. The number increased from approximately 7.5 percent in 1975, to about 11 percent in 1990 and nearly 14 percent in 2001.

The real question in all of this is whether special education works. *Unfortunately, no documented evidence shows that placing children into special education increases their ability to read, write or calculate — even when their learning needs are that fundamental.*

### **The Charter View of Special Education**

It is noteworthy that parents rallied in the mid to late 1960s to present a critical mass when the mandatory special education law first was envisioned. This also was true at the federal level in 1975, when P.L. 94-142 was adopted to require special education nationwide. Parents were instrumental in securing change in a system when options didn't exist for all children.

A historic parallel has occurred during the past decade, with parents demanding development of charter schools because quality education is not available for all children. Some parents have decided the system, created to address the needs of their children, is not meeting their expectations. They do not like their children being labeled and are displeased with services and a lack of results. In response, many launch a quest for options that provide educational programs for their children in different ways. Some turn to home schooling with a commitment to do the job themselves. Some find parochial school settings and others turn to the new avenue — charter schools.

Charter public schools, working closely with parents and addressing what they have long sought for their children, are positioned to offer a model of greater inclusion when that serves students best. They are open-minded, prepared and eager to implement a system based on prevention, analysis of developmental stages, and provision of learning opportunities commensurate with a child’s development. If a child needs instruction in deficit areas, charters can provide it in ways that celebrate and enhance individual learning styles. Such concepts are operational already in many charter schools.

A critical paradigm shift, which includes a change in mindset and behavior, is needed for any school to be in the forefront of providing effective options for children with disabilities. Chuck Stockwell, CEO of Smart Schools, Inc., which serves three Michigan charter schools, created *the following chart to summarize the shift occurring in charter schools*:

<u>Traditional Special Education</u>	VS	<u>Choice, Prevention, and Greater Inclusion</u>
<b>Labels</b>		<b>Describes</b>
<b>Segregates</b>		<b>Includes</b>
<b>Paper Intensive</b>		<b>Teacher-Support Intensive</b>
<b>Accommodative</b>		<b>Remedial</b>
<b>Rules rigid</b>		<b>Innovative</b>
<b>Problem-Identifying</b>		<b>Problem-Solving</b>
<b>Expensive</b>		<b>Short-Term Expensive</b>

**The President’s Commission on Excellence In Special Education**

In October 2001, President Bush appointed educational consumers and providers to a commission to study and make recommendations regarding the future of special education in the United States. On July 1, 2002 the Commission released its report, with the following findings:

**Finding 1:** IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Act) generally provides basic legal safeguards and access for children with disabilities. However, the current system often places process above results and bureaucratic compliance above student achievement, excellence, and outcomes. The system is driven by complex regulations, excessive paperwork, and ever-increasing administrative demands at all levels — for child, parent and local and state education agencies. Too often, qualifying for special education becomes an end-point rather than a gateway to more effective instruction and strong intervention.

**Finding 2:** The current system uses an antiquated model that waits for a child to fail, instead of a model based on prevention and intervention. Too little emphasis is put on prevention, early and accurate identification of learning and behavior problems, and aggressive intervention using research-based approaches. This means students with disabilities don’t receive help early when that could be most effective. Special education should be for those who do not respond to strong and appropriate instruction and methods provided in general education.

**Finding 3:** Children placed in special education are general education children first. Despite this, educators and policymakers view the systems separately and tally the costs of special education separately, not as additional services with add-on expense. In this system, children with disabilities often are *not* treated as members of the general education population whose instructional needs could be met with scientifically based approaches. Instead, they are considered separately with unique costs, thus creating incentives for misidentification and academic isolation and thereby preventing the pooling of all available resources to aid learning. General and special education are not separable at any level — cost, instruction, or identification.

**Finding 4:** When a child fails to make progress in special education, parents have inadequate options and little recourse. Parents have their child’s best interests in mind, but they often have little power when the system fails them.

**Finding 5:** A culture of compliance has developed from the pressures of litigation and diverts much energy of public schools’ first mission: educating every child.

**Finding 6:** Many methods of identifying children with disabilities lack validity. Thousands of children are misidentified every year, while many others are not identified early enough or at all.

**Finding 7:** Children with disabilities require highly qualified teachers. Teachers, parents, and education officials desire better preparation, support, and professional development related to the needs of the children. Many educators wish they had better preparation before entering the classroom and better tools for identifying needs early and accurately.

**Finding 8:** Special education research needs enhanced rigor and long-term coordination to support the needs of children, educators, and parents. The current system does not always embrace or implement established, evidence-based practices.

**Finding 9:** The current focus on compliance and bureaucratic imperatives, instead of on academic achievement and social outcomes, fails too many children. Too few graduate from high school or transition to full employment and post-secondary opportunities, despite IDEA provisions for transition services. Parents want an education system that is results-oriented and focused on the child’s needs in school and beyond.

Based on those findings, the Commission offered the following major recommendations:

**Recommendation 1: *Focus on results, not on process.***

IDEA must return to its mission: serving the needs of every child. While legal and procedural safeguards are necessary to guarantee a “free, appropriate public education,” IDEA will fulfill its intended purpose only if it raises the expectations for students and becomes results-oriented, rather than being driven by process, litigation, regulation, and confrontation. In short, the system must be judged by opportunities it provides and outcomes achieved by each child.

**Recommendation 2: *Embrace a model of prevention, not a model of failure.***

The current model waits for a child to fail, rather than intervening early to prevent failure. Reforms must include early identification and swift intervention, using scientifically based instruction and teaching methods. This will require substantial change in America’s elementary and secondary schools as well as reform in teacher preparation, recruitment, and support.

**Recommendation 3: *Consider children with disabilities as general education children first.***

Special and general education are treated separately, but in fact *share* responsibility for children with disabilities. The systems must collaborate to ensure that children with additional needs benefit from strong teaching and instructional methods offered through general education. Special education should not be treated as a separate cost system, and expense evaluations must reflect all expenditures for a child, including general funds. Funding arrangements should not create an incentive for special education identification or spur isolation of children with learning or behavior problems. Each special education need must be met using a school's comprehensive resources, not by relegating students to a separately funded program. Flexibility in use of educational funds, including those provided through IDEA, is essential.

The report goes on to suggest other numerous specific recommendations and can be found on the Internet or obtained from members of Congress.

In summary: The President's Commission finds great fault in the existing system of special education and suggests major reform. Charter schools are creating models that address the identified problems and are finding success in building a new and improved system that serves all children with innovative and effective programming.

**MAPSA Statement of Belief**

**MAPSA's Board of Directors, representing Michigan's 200+ charter schools and 70,000+ charter students, believes the future of special education — including for children whose primary needs are personal adjustment and learning to read — rests in going beyond the traditional system and its shortcomings as noted by the President's Commission on Special Education. High-performing schools will provide children with innovative interventions that assure adequate assessment and remediation in a more inclusive setting while operating within legal mandates for the provision of special education.**

Charter schools were developed to give students and families additional options in education. They present fresh opportunities to create a new model for serving students with unique needs in a setting that offers greater inclusion while focusing on prevention and remediation.

The original law outlines the purpose of charter schools. Choice is the dominant characteristic, giving parents alternative settings for the education of their children. The second characteristic is innovative programming that gives dynamic educators a supportive environment in which to use their leading-edge practices. The third characteristic, often legally restricted in Michigan while more prominent in other states, is freedom from various mandates and regulation so innovation and student-centered practices are encouraged rather than buried in traditional, burdensome and bureaucratic structures.

Within that framework, students deemed to be disabled still are entitled to a free and appropriate education; charters must follow state and federal laws, rules, and policies. Charters are going well beyond that however, expanding and elevating expectations for children with disabilities because the schools' structures and characteristics facilitate greater individualized attention for all students.

MAPSA's Board of Directors, representing Michigan's charter schools, is committed to meeting the law while revamping the provision of special education so the factors that have made the traditional system ineffective for so many children can be revised and remedied.

**MAPSA and Michigan's charter schools commit to taking a lead role in creating a system that:**

- ✓ emphasizes prevention rather than identification;
- ✓ describes children's learning difficulties instead of applying labels;
- ✓ serves children in more inclusive settings;
- ✓ serves children by giving teachers intensive support instead of burdening them with extensive paperwork;
- ✓ provides remediation in lieu of accommodation;
- ✓ serves children through innovative approaches instead of rigid, rule-based programs; and
- ✓ directs energy to problem-solving instead of problem-identification.

**Response to Critics**

Critics have attacked the charter movement since its inception. The history of education is replete with challenges to reform of the status quo, with change and creativity often seen as threats. Still, MAPSA acknowledges that some charters have not always been perfect in serving children with disabilities. Contributing factors include lack of sufficient funds to serve children with severe disabilities; lack of complete knowledge of myriad requirements; creation of schools with environments that do not consider students with significant learning challenges; and finally, lack of cooperation from other local education agencies, including ISDs.

In January 2003, the Michigan Protection and Advocacy Service released a report that examined the number of students with disabilities in charter schools and compared it to the national average. The author reviewed the records of 40 students in 37 PSAs.

The Advocacy Services report contained criticisms based mostly on the premise that some PSAs do not have the same percentage of students with disabilities as do traditional schools. *It is erroneous to think however, that any one school should have a comparable percentage to the national average.* It is possible for a school, based on its charter, to have no children with confirmed disabilities, just as it is possible for a school to serve all students with disabilities. *Enrollment depends on parents choosing a particular school.* Therefore, the percentage of special education students reflects nothing more than those parents exercising choice in schools.

The report is more revealing of ISD monitoring and Michigan Department of Education compliance reviews. If ISDs or state or federal staffs find violations of rule, they should report and immediately address them. If any agency or citizen has evidence to believe a rule is being violated in *any* public school, the organization or individual has an obligation to make a report and expect an investigation. A clear process already exists when a violation is alleged.

In contrast, a report was released by Public Sector Consultants Inc. in July 2000 and contains no mention of problems with children identified as eligible for special education. This is not to deny that problems may exist. Yet, for a highly regarded company such as Public Sector Consultants to do a study titled "Issues in Michigan's Public School Academy Initiative" and *not* reference special education implies this matter is not worthy of discussion.

And finally, it must be noted that the federal government awarded a grant to the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) to survey charter schools in the United States and to study the provision of identification and service to students with disabilities. Its report found charter schools across the nation often had not instituted the *traditional* special

education system but were in fact serving students with disabilities. NASDSE has received a second grant to develop a training package.

### **Inter-District Cooperation Necessary**

An issue that must be clarified is the provision of suitable services for students with physical disabilities (deafness, blindness) and severe cognitive and/or multiple disabilities. All parents have opportunities to enroll their children in charter schools. However, just like other public schools, through interschool agreements via an ISD plan, the Individualized Educational Program Team (IEPT) should be able to place students in center programs or purchase services when those are deemed to be the most effective option.

Originators of the mandatory special education law realized every district could not provide a full continuum of programs and services and gave ISDs a planning role in coordinating provision of that spectrum. Responsibility for the education of each child rests with the local school, but through cooperative agreements, one district might provide the center program for children with profound hearing loss, while another would serve children with autism. This makes more sense than every district operating duplicate programs when perhaps only one or two children necessitate such services.

Today, PSAs are in the same situation as small public schools: responsible for appropriate programs and services for all children. As any local school, PSAs need to work with and have cooperation from ISDs, with access to center programs and the ability to place students in those programs when they are the most appropriate educational setting. ISDs have a legal responsibility to include in their plans how special education programs and services will be provided to all public schools, including charter schools, in their jurisdiction.

Representative parents of children with disabilities from each PSA should be members of the ISDs' parent advisory committees. PSA teachers should be welcomed to in-service training offered by ISDs. And, charter schools should be able to work with ISDs in terms of counting children for federal funds, accessing districts' center programs, sharing curriculum materials, and jointly using speech and language services and other therapies.

**MAPSA is committed to working with its member schools, their authorizers and service providers to help develop practices, policies, and procedures that will:**

- Lead to solid relationships with Michigan's 57 ISDs; and
- Foster the inclusion of charter schools in ISD plans, including providing alternative program sites when appropriate.

### **Initial Actions Suggested for Individual Charter Schools**

The MAPSA Special Education Task Force developing this paper recommends the following basic actions for individual charter schools, although in many cases they already are occurring:

- **Enrollment forms should request information of disability status.** PSAs need as much information as possible about children being enrolled. PSAs may choose to re-evaluate children, but they should attempt to determine if children have received services in other school districts.
- **Children who enroll in PSAs should be monitored to determine if there is reason to suspect a disability.** Quality education is rooted in baseline developmental skills and in learning styles. PSAs need to know precisely where students stand in developmental

prerequisites for reading, math, and social interaction. The emphasis is not on suspecting a disability, but on assessing current development and assuring periodic progress.

- **Steps taken to improve learning should be tracked and recorded.** Through continuous assessment, schools know when learning is not occurring as expected. At that time, children can be further assessed to determine what skills need to be developed and/or how teaching styles should be changed to enable greater learning. Steps taken to improve learning for *every student, with or without a disability*, should be documented.
- **Schools should have a formalized process for handling complaints.** Conflicts and disagreements are inevitable and clear processes are needed for resolving parental complaints. Once again, the ISD has a role, potentially through mediation that avoids time-consuming, costly, and hostile formal due process hearings. Authorizers should be knowledgeable of laws and rules, able to assess concerns before they become formal complaints, review complaint investigation reports, and facilitate mediation.

### **Actions for MAPSA**

**Charter public schools have a timely and monumental opportunity to be local, state, and national leaders in innovative thinking and service provision for students with disabilities. Charters are at the right place at the right time for a nation desperately needing models in the revision of educational programming for its citizens with disabilities. Working in cooperation with traditional public schools, charter public schools can accelerate the advancement and improvement of educational services to all children.**

Consistent with this document, MAPSA *has*:

- Adopted the President's Commission on Special Education report as the foundation upon which Michigan charter schools will lead the way in implementing a new and better approach to the education of children with disabilities.
- Created a Charter School Special Education Task Force that will help spur widespread adoption of the beliefs, approach and actions noted in this report.

Furthermore, MAPSA *will*:

- Identify model charter schools serving children with disabilities in new and better ways and help to secure state discretionary funds and/or federal charter school grants so that innovation and success can be fostered, documented, and disseminated.
- Provide and promote training opportunities for schools, authorizers and service providers, sometimes in conjunction with state or national organizations. Efforts will build on special education training programs coordinated by MAPSA during the past three years.
- Encourage charter leaders to be active in statewide organizations promoting high-quality special education so up-to-date information can be obtained and disseminated.
- Work in cooperation with ISDs to assist in development of policies and procedures so all children in charter or traditional schools have access to a full continuum of services.
- Strive to assist charter leaders in creating and maintaining relationships with Michigan's 57 ISDs in regards to special education services.

- Assist in arranging cooperative agreements with traditional public school programs for the provision of special education services to all students.

### **Conclusions**

- While change can be difficult, charters are creating and implementing a special education system based on assessment of learning styles rather than identification of disabilities (labeling); documentation of educational progress rather than an emphasis on process; greater inclusion when appropriate rather than pulling students out of regular classes; and clear accountability rather than excessive and exhaustive paperwork.
- Michigan PSAs are in a position to lead a new vision of quality education for children with disabilities. Through parental CHOICE, PREVENTION, and GREATER INCLUSION, opportunities for children with disabilities can be enhanced.
- Negative reports of PSA service to students with disabilities are largely exaggerated, with successful and innovative programs rarely noted. Charters are committed to finding a balance between compliance and effective education that truly helps children learn.
- Means already exist for those who believe any school district is out of compliance to note such situations and expect an investigation.
- Effective, respectful, and on-going relationships with ISDs must be developed. PSA authorizers, which have oversight responsibility in the effective evaluation and education of children with disabilities, should be part of those relationships.
- MAPSA, authorizers, and the Department of Education should provide training to enable compliance without exacerbating problems identified by the President's Commission.
- Model programs should be identified and funded with federal grants. Information about effective practices and model programs should be disseminated to other districts.

### **MAPSA Special Education Task Force Members**

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