

**Program Review Proposal  
Special Education Services  
District 89**

Evaluation is defined as the systematic investigation of the worth or merit of an object (e.g. a program, school activity or instructional material). The most important purpose of an evaluation is not to prove, but to improve. Program evaluations provide an opportunity for feedback over a span of time that can be used to improve the quality and effectiveness of services and activities. It is meant to be a functional activity; one in which evaluation results can be used in making decisions and earning credibility for stakeholders and others with an interest and need to know.

For District 89, a process in which the evaluation outcomes represent meaningful constructions that individual stakeholders form to “make sense” of the current program and services is being proposed. This type of program evaluation rests on two elements: the first is determining what questions are to be asked and what information is to be collected on the basis of stakeholders input. The second element unites the evaluator and the stakeholders in an interaction that creates the product of the evaluation. The areas of focus and information to be gathered are determined at the initial meeting or interview; the product will emerge from the interviews, observations, and review of other documents and data.

This process would provide District 89 with a “picture” of your current special education program, including recommendations. It is important to note that these recommendations will be grounded in the thoughts, ideas, and concerns of the stakeholders. The design will meet the applicable sections of The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1994, within the following four areas:

- Utility: To ensure that an evaluation will serve the information needs of intended users.
- Feasibility: To ensure that an evaluation is realistic, prudent, diplomatic and frugal.
- Propriety: To ensure that an evaluation will be conducted legally, ethically, and with due regard for the welfare of those involved in the evaluation, as well as those affected by its results.
- Accuracy: To ensure that an evaluation will reveal and convey technically adequate information about the features that determine the worth or merit of the program being evaluated.

To develop this “picture”, individual stakeholders will be asked to participate in several focus groups or group interviews. These stakeholders would include parents and special and general educators. Additionally, Central Office Administration, Principals, and the Superintendent may be interviewed. Documents and other data will be requested throughout the evaluation. Observations of selected classrooms will occur.

Based on an initial conversation with the Superintendent, the evaluation will focus on the following areas:

- The achievement of students with disabilities in the district
- The efficacy and effectiveness of the service delivery model in the district
- Access to the general education curriculum and the least restrictive environment
- The utilization and adequacy of staff
- The roles and relationships of special education teachers
- The building of relationships and communications with parents
- The effectiveness of decision making and problem solving structures
- The effect of service delivery on the total school population
- Professional development needs
- Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment practices in core academic areas

The evaluation will span pre-school through K-8 programs. A final report, with recommendations, will be written and presented to the Superintendent at the end of the evaluation.

Estimated Cost:

Consultant fee: 10 days on site @\$1500/day \$15,000  
(includes all travel expenses and phone/email consultation time)

BOARD OF EDUCATION

CONSULTANT

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mrs. Regina Rivers, District 89 Board President

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Dr. Sandi Cole

Principle Investigator

Dr. Sandi Cole, Director  
Center on Education and Lifelong Learning  
Indiana Institute on Disability and Community  
Indiana University  
Bloomington, IN 47408

Dr. Cole spent 22 years as a public school teacher and administrator at both the elementary and secondary levels. Her areas of expertise include collaboration and teaming, school reform, program evaluation and instructional approaches for diverse learners. Dr. Cole is an adjunct faculty member at Indiana University School of Education and faculty in the Graduate School, Indiana University. She has been lead evaluator for evaluations in Cincinnati Public Schools, Hinsdale School District 181, Hinsdale, IL, Western Boone School Corporation, South Bend Schools, South Bend, IN, Evanston-Skokie District 65, Evanston, IL, District 21, Wheeling IL, Upper Dublin School District, Maple Glen, PA. (Vita available upon request)

References:

Dr. Hardy Murphy, Superintendent  
Evanston District 65  
(847) 859-8010

Dr. Markay Winston, Chief Officer of Special Services and Supports  
Chicago Public Schools  
(513) 886-5900

Dr. Kate Hyland, Superintendent  
District 21, Wheeling, IL  
(847) 537-8270