

Elementary Day and Residential Schools for Children with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders: Characteristics of Educators and Students

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Abstract

This national study describes students, teachers, and principals in elementary day treatment and residential schools for students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). A survey was mailed to a random sample of 480 teachers and principals from elementary-level public and private, day treatment and residential schools. A total of 271 (56.5%) principals and 229 (47.7%) teachers responded. Teachers and principals reported education and certification generally consistent with professionals in public schools. Also, most teachers and principals had been at their current school five years or less. Students were involved with foster care and juvenile corrections at higher rates than youth in the general population. Students also commonly returned to less restrictive settings upon exit. Results and implications are discussed.

Day treatment and residential schools are two of the more restrictive educational placements within the continuum of services for students with EBD. The use of these day treatment and residential schools is consistent with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (2004), which guarantees students the right to services in the least restrictive environment. These settings are necessary to assure varied levels of restrictiveness and meet each student's needs. Advocacy groups and experts in the field of EBD agree

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that a full range of services, including day treatment and residential schools, is necessary (Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders, 1994; Council for Exceptional Children, 1997; Gable, Laycock, Maroney, & Smith 1991, Webber & Scheuermann, 1997).

Specifically, day treatment schools are structured day programs that offer a combination of mental health intervention and special education to children and adolescents, as well as social and clinical support to their families (Armstrong, Groszer, & Palma, 1992). Residential schools for youth with EBD are comprehensive therapeutic educational settings where students have 24-hour monitoring and their social, emotional, and educational needs are addressed (Kaufman & Snucker, 1995). Residential schools are distinct from psychiatric hospital programs and are not licensed as hospitals (Rivera & Kutash, 1994).

Throughout the U.S., there is a current emphasis on educating students with disabilities with nonlabeled peers. However, more students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) ages 6-21 are placed in restrictive settings than youth with any other disability classification. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2002), the number of students with EBD served in day treatment and residential settings has increased more than 13% in the last 10 years. Currently, approximately 80,000 students with EBD are educated in separate day treatment or residential schools.

Despite the importance of day treatment and residential schools in providing appropriate levels of services to youth with EBD and increasing enrollment, we know little about the students served, their teachers, and principals (Landrum, Singh, Nemi, Ellis, & Best, 1995). Periodic snapshots are needed to assist educators, policymakers, and parents in monitoring both the students that are being served and the educators providing the services. An understanding of student and educator characteristics could lead to the identification of traits that contribute to the poor performance of those students. For example, the need for certified and trained teachers of students with EBD has been a major concern (Lauritzen & Friedman, 1991). However, this issue has not been adequately studied within day treatment and residential schools. Additionally, the variability of student characteristics across exclusionary settings that differ by school organizational structure (i.e., public school, private non-profit, private for-profit) and school type (i.e., day treatment, residential, combined day treatment and residential) is unknown. Such variations could have important implications about overrepresentation of certain groups of students and further implications for policies and practices.

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Students

Three primary are students in day treatment services received; and (there is no national in gender in day treatment know that among students, African American (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). Since restrictive school settings for youth, 2001; 2005). Current data on does not provide information solely for an extended, the information that students exit day treatment system (Baenen, Glenw: Researchers have

students in day treatment services, & Hartsough, 1995, & Stavrakaki, 1989). Variations may be associated with edition of the Diagnostic (DSM IV-R) (American eligibility definitions.

A history of abuse juvenile justice system treatment and residential success in such programs (1996). As noted, most schools are identified as with EBD have higher involvement. For example, residential schools in states arrested at least once in 1996). Students with EBD participation with the frequency of abuse, or neglect. In a review of students labeled EBD neglected, and 51% enrolled (Gessner, 1999). Similar reported that over half of in their study had experi

Students

Three primary areas of student characteristics are of interest for students in day treatment and residential schools: (a) enrollment; (b) services received; and (c) involvement of outside agencies. Currently there is no national information concerning student ethnicity and gender in day treatment and residential schools. However, we do know that among students receiving special education services in general, African Americans are overrepresented (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). Similarly, this group is overrepresented in other restrictive school settings, such as juvenile corrections (Building Blocks for Youth, 2001; Quinn, Rutherford, Leone, Osher, & Poirier, 2005). Current data on student status in day and residential settings does not provide information about the number of students who are enrolled solely for an evaluation or student length-of-stay. Although dated, the information that does exist indicates that as many as 77% of students exit day treatment programs and return to the regular school system (Baenen, Glenwick, Stephens, Neuhaus, & Mowrey, 1986).

Researchers have also noted that one-half to three-fourths of the students in day treatment or residential schools are labeled ED (Duncan, Forness, & Hartsough, 1995; McClure, Ferguson, Boodoosingh, Turgay, & Stavakaki, 1989). Variability in rates of identification across settings may be associated with disability classifications based the fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM IV-R) (American Psychiatric Association, 1994) versus IDEA eligibility definitions.

A history of abuse and neglect and involvement with the juvenile justice system can have a major affect on youth in day treatment and residential schools and negatively impact student success in such programs (Carran, Nemerofsky, Rock, & Kerins, 1996). As noted, most students in day treatment and residential schools are identified as EBD and there is some evidence that youth with EBD have higher incidence of both abuse and juvenile justice involvement. For example, in one study of 812 youth with EBD from residential schools in six states, over a seven-year period 43.3% were arrested at least once and 34.4% were adjudicated (Greenbaum et al., 1996). Students with EBD may also have experienced high rates of participation with the foster care system due to family dysfunction, abuse, or neglect. In a national survey, teachers estimated that 38% of students labeled EBD were physically or sexually abused, 41% neglected, and 51% emotionally abused (Oseroff, Oseroff, Westling, & Gesner, 1999). Similarly, Mattison, Spitznagel, and Felix (1998) reported that over half of students with serious emotional disturbance in their study had experienced abuse. Researchers also identified that,

for young children, family dysfunction was a significant contributor to persistent psychiatric problems (Offord et al., 1992) and degree of family difficulties predicted student behavioral progress (Gritzenko, Sayegh, & Papineau, 1994). Currently there is no national information that identifies the number of students in day treatment and residential schools that have previous or current involvement in foster care or with juvenile justice systems associated with delinquency or being in need of supervision.

Teachers and Principals

There are no studies that have examined teacher and principal characteristics in day treatment and residential schools for students with EBD. The available research on teacher characteristics focuses more broadly on special educators and teachers of students with EBD. Principal data are limited to general information on principals within public and private schools. The available research is discussed below for teachers and principals within two areas: (a) demographics and experience; and (b) certification and degree.

Demographics and experience. There is a dearth of information concerning demographics (e.g., age, gender) of teachers and principals in day treatment and residential schools. However, researchers (Clark-Chiarelli & Singer, 1995) have noted that half of teachers of students labeled EBD were 35 years old or younger and about three-fourths were female (Westat, 2002a). Additionally, in public schools the average age of principals is approximately 49 years old and about 44% are female (Gates, Ringel, Santianez, Ross, & Chung, 2003). There is some indication that teacher quality is related to teacher experience. Specifically, teachers with less than two years experience are less effective than more senior teachers (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2000) and teachers with greater experience are more effective than teachers new to the field (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Also, principals in public schools have an average of nine years of experience and those in private schools average about 10 years of experience (Gates et al., 2003). In addition to length of time teaching, length at a single school is an important variable that provides for continuity and program consistency within exclusionary schools. Almost two-thirds of teachers of EBD students had been teaching at their present school for 5 years or less (Clark-Chiarelli & Singer, 1995).

Certification and degree. The difficulty of measuring teacher quality has compelled researchers to rely on indirect measures, such as teacher education and certification (Clark-Chiarelli & Singer, 1995) with some justification. Teacher certification is strongly correlated to student math and reading achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

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Current legislation (The that by the end of the 2 be staffed by a highly teacher will be certified his or her teaching assi Institute, 2003).

However, teacher levels of teacher traini 1964; Grosenick, Georg and Singer (1995) repoi about 20% were either a probationary certifica were less likely to be cei general educators or sp

Similarly, when as and education are con information is available and no national inform treatment and residenti noted that approximat master's degree and 13,

Organizational Structure

Relationships bet type (e.g., day treatme) residential) provide a n different educational se Additionally, there is a the characteristics of stu schools. For example, based on school organi non-profit school, priva characteristics across sc highlight unique needs Currently, no informati vary across different exc

Research Questions

The data reported addressed characteristic EBD in restrictive setti two research questions: students, and principals

Current legislation (The No Child Left Behind Act, 2001) mandates that by the end of the 2005-06 school year, every U.S. classroom will be staffed by a highly qualified teacher. The implication is that each teacher will be certified by the state in an area that is consistent with his or her teaching assignment (Educational Policy Research Reform Institute, 2003).

However, teachers of youth with EBD have historically had low levels of teacher training and certification (Morse, Cutler, & Fink, 1964; Grosenick, George, & George, 1987). Recently, Clark-Chiarelli and Singer (1995) reported that among teachers of youth with EBD, about 20% were either not certified, had temporary certificates, or had a probationary certificate. Additionally, teachers of youth with EBD were less likely to be certified for their main teaching assignment than general educators or special educators (Westat, 2002b).

Similarly, when assessing the quality of principals, certification and education are common measures (Gates et al., 2003). Limited information is available on these principal characteristics in general and no national information exists with regard to principals in day treatment and residential schools. However, Doud and Keller (1998) noted that approximately 57% of public school principals had a master's degree and 13% had earned a doctorate.

Organizational Structure and School Type

Relationships between student characteristics and school type (e.g., day treatment, residential, combined day treatment and residential) provide a needed perspective on the students served in different educational settings (Cullinan, Epstein, & Saborie, 1992). Additionally, there is a possibility that other issues may be linked to the characteristics of students placed in day treatment and residential schools. For example, differences may exist for students served based on school organizational structure (i.e., public school, private non-profit school, private for-profit school). Comparison of student characteristics across school types and organizational structure may highlight unique needs of students within certain school settings. Currently, no information exists to identify if student characteristics vary across different exclusionary schools.

Research Questions

The data reported here is part of a larger national study that addressed characteristics and school-level policies for students with EBD in restrictive settings (Gagnon, 2002). This report addresses two research questions: (a) what are the characteristics of teachers, students, and principals in day treatment and residential schools for

students with EBD; and (b) how do characteristics of students in those settings compare across school types and organizational structure.

Methodology

Sample

The study consisted of a national random sample of private and public day treatment and residential schools for children with EBD in any of the first through sixth grades. A comprehensive list of alternative education schools, alternative education programs, and special education schools was purchased from Market Data Retrieval (2002). The schools in the sample included public and private programs operated by public school districts, counties, states, and religiously affiliated organizations. An initial review of the 6,110 schools in the comprehensive list revealed that many schools were neither day treatment nor residential schools for children with EBD (e.g., schools for the deaf, schools for the blind). Consequently, additional sampling procedures were necessary to verify that schools qualified for the study.

Phone calls to a random sample of 20 schools on the original list suggested that approximately 10% of the schools on the list would meet criteria for inclusion in the study. Subsequently, to ensure an approximate sample size of 400, 4,000 schools were randomly selected from the total database of 6,110. Each school was called and asked questions using a structured protocol to verify they met criteria for inclusion in the study (i.e., day treatment or residential facility for children with emotional or behavioral disorders; serve students in any of grades 1-6; not solely a hospital program). As a result of this process, 636 schools were identified and mailed a survey. However, during the initial verification process, phone interviews commonly occurred with an administrative assistant. Because we were concerned that some administrative assistants might be unfamiliar with the terms *day treatment* and *residential* schools for students with EBD, the first question on the principal survey asked respondents to verify that their school was day treatment or residential in order to ensure sample validity. Subsequently, 156 principals or teachers responded that they had been inaccurately classified and these schools were excluded from the analysis. In situations where the teacher and principal reports were inconsistent ($n = 4$), the principal report was used. In each of these cases, the principal identified the school as day treatment or residential and both teacher and principal surveys were included in the sample. Therefore, the final sample consisted of 480 schools. This multiple screening approach made certain that data were collected and analyzed only from day treatment and residential schools serving youth with EBD.

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Participant Selection

To identify characteristics of the sample, we conducted two surveys: one principal and one teacher survey. One principal and one teacher survey were conducted at each school. From each school, the principal and teacher identified the list with the teacher & Mundschenk, 1997) to randomly identify one teacher from each school. Randomization of schools in the sample provided a representative sample of day treatment and residential schools serving youth with EBD.

Instrumentation

Based on a review of the literature, a focus group with principals, two surveys were developed: one for teachers and one for principals. The teacher survey included 57 closed-ended questions and two open-ended questions. The principal survey included 40 closed-ended questions and two open-ended questions. Teachers were asked about their current year of teaching, their current year of teaching, and their current year of teaching. Principals were asked about their current year of teaching, their current year of teaching, and their current year of teaching.

Principals were asked about their age, gender, years of teaching, and their current school. Teachers were asked about their age, gender, years of teaching, and their current school. Both surveys offered choices more specific to 13 questions concerning the school. Concerning the percentage of students with EBD, psychological, or psychological

Participant Selection

To identify characteristics of both teachers and principals, the principal and one teacher were selected from each randomly selected school. One principal and one teacher survey was mailed to the principal at each school in the sample. To randomly identify one teacher from each school, the principal was asked to use an alphabetized list of teachers for students in grades 1-6 and provide the first teacher from the list with the teacher survey. Researchers (Epstein et al, 1997; Foley & Mundschenk, 1997) have used a similar approach with principals to randomly identify teachers. Although randomly selecting just one teacher from each school provided a limited sample size, the randomization of schools and teachers increased the likelihood that the sample provided a nationally representative group of teachers in day treatment and residential schools for elementary students with EBD.

Instrumentation

Based on a review of relevant research, discussion with experts in the field, a focus group for teachers, and another focus group of principals, two surveys were developed. Questions concerning student, teacher, and principal characteristics were part of a larger survey that included 57 closed-end questions and took approximately 25 minutes to complete. The current report focuses on survey questions in three areas: (a) teacher characteristics based on self-reports; (b) principal characteristics based on self-reports; and (c) student characteristics based on principal responses to questions regarding all students in the first through sixth grades in their school. Teachers responded to four closed-ended questions concerning demographics and experience and two closed-ended questions concerning certification and degree. Teachers were asked about their gender and age, the number of years, including the current year that they had been a teacher, and years they taught at their current school, including the current year. Teachers were also queried about all educational certifications currently held and their highest degree earned.

Principals were asked the same six closed-ended questions about their age, gender, years as an administrator, years as an administrator in their current school, and highest degree earned. However, the question about current certification varied from the teachers and offered choices more specific to principals. Principals also responded to 13 questions concerning characteristics of students in grades 1 - 6 at their school. Concerning enrollment, principals were queried on the percentage of students enrolled in the school solely for a behavioral, psychological, or psychiatric evaluation. Principals responded to all

other survey questions based on those students who were not enrolled solely for an evaluation. Principals also reported on the source of students served in their school (i.e., from the school district, from the state in which the school is located, and other states or the District of Columbia), the average length of enrollment for students, and the percent of students that exited to less restrictive settings. Principals also provided information about the gender and ethnicity of students served.

Principals likewise provided data about the total number of students receiving special education services in several disability categories, and the number of students with a Section 504 accommodations plan. Concerning involvement of outside agencies, principals reported the percentage range of students who had previous or current involvement in foster care, with current involvement in juvenile justice due to delinquency, and with current involvement in juvenile justice due to being in need of supervision. Principals also described their school type and organizational structure (i.e., public school, private non-profit school, private for-profit school).

Reliability and Validity

Several procedures enhanced survey reliability and validity. Teacher and principal surveys maintained a standardized format, directions, and questions (Fink, 1995). The investigators used a codebook to maintain consistency and record decisions during data entry (Litwin, 1995). To ensure reliability during data entry, 30% of teacher and 30% of principal surveys were coded independently by a research assistant. Reliability was calculated by dividing the number of agreements by the number of disagreements and multiplying by 100%. Data entry reliability for both the teacher and principal surveys was 99.9%. Two methods were used to increase the validity of the survey instrument. Initially, an advisory group reviewed and made recommendations regarding the survey and study methodology. Also, individual teacher and principal focus groups commented on the format and content of the surveys. These instruments were modified based on the advisory group and focus group feedback.

Data Collection

Initially, principals in the target schools received an introductory letter about the study. The first survey mailing included a teacher survey with a \$2.00 bill attached, a principal survey with a \$2.00 bill attached, two self-addressed stamped envelopes, and directions for randomly selecting a teacher to complete the survey. Two subsequent mailings and phone calls encouraged principals to complete (or have teachers complete) the survey.

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For the 480 random study, 271 (56.5%) principals were returned, representing all schools had both School-level comparison on several characteristics the school was located these groups. The only respondents and nonrespondents ($p < .01$) for schools were returned and school number of teachers and school education schools ($n = 15$ or alternative education

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics To compare student demographics, chi-square, ANOVA were completed. Special compare proportions and dependence existed across obtained for certain special education services, classifications, number Independent T-test comparison and type of school and or between controlling for T was used for all chi-square

Teacher Characteristics

Teachers were evenly 26-35 years ($n = 84, 36.7\%$) ($n = 65, 28.4\%$). Fewer than 25 years or younger ($n = 185, 80.8\%$) than me teaching five years or less 10 years ($n = 48, 21.0\%$) teachers reported teaching 10.5%) or 16 or more years reported that the total number of years or less ($n = 68, 29.7\%$)

For the 480 randomly selected schools that met criteria for the study, 271 (56.5%) principal surveys and 229 (47.7%) teacher surveys were returned, representing 284 schools. Almost half ($n = 216$, 44.58%) of all schools had both teacher and principal surveys returned. School-level comparisons between respondents and nonrespondents on several characteristics such as school type and region in which the school was located revealed very minor differences between these groups. The only statistically significant difference between respondents and nonrespondents was for school type ($\chi^2 = 26.179$, 2, $p < .01$) for schools in which both teacher and principal surveys were returned and schools where no surveys were returned. A greater number of teachers and principals returned surveys from special education schools ($n = 197$) than alternative education schools ($n = 12$) or alternative education programs ($n = 7$).

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics provided an overview of survey data. To compare student data across school type and organizational structure, chi-square, ANOVA, and Independent T-test comparisons were completed. Specifically, chi-square analysis was used to compare proportions and identify where significant independence or dependence existed across the two noted variables. Interval data were obtained for certain student characteristics (e.g., number receiving special education services, number in various special education classifications, number in each ethnicity, gender). ANOVA and Independent T-test comparisons were conducted on these variables and type of school and organizational structure. To maintain a balance between controlling for Type I and Type II errors, an alpha level of .01 was used for all chi-square, ANOVA, and Independent *t*-tests.

Results

Teacher Characteristics

Teachers were evenly distributed across three age ranges: 26-35 years ($n = 84$, 36.7%), 36-45 years ($n = 58$, 25.3%), and 46-55 years ($n = 65$, 28.4%). Fewer teachers were 56 years or older ($n = 12$, 5.2%) or 25 years or younger ($n = 10$, 4.4%). Many more teachers were female ($n = 185$, 80.8%) than male ($n = 44$, 19.2%). Most teachers reported teaching five years or less in their current school ($n = 124$, 54.1%), 6-10 years ($n = 48$, 21.0%) or 16 years or greater ($n = 68$, 29.7%). Fewer teachers reported teaching at their current school 11-15 years ($n = 24$, 10.5%) or 16 or more years ($n = 33$, 14.4%). The majority of educators reported that the total number of years teaching ranged from five years or less ($n = 68$, 29.7%) or 6-10 ($n = 64$, 27.9%) years. Additionally,

29.7% ($n = 68$) of educators reported teaching 16 or more years. A smaller number of teachers ($n = 29$, 12.7%) reported teaching 11-15 years total.

Approximately an equal number of teachers held bachelors ($n = 105$, 46.1%) and master's degrees ($n = 119$, 52.2%). Few teachers had doctoral degrees ($n = 3$, 1.3%) or completed post-doctoral study ($n = 1$, 0.4%). When queried about their educational certifications, teachers ($n = 229$) reported all certifications that they held. In such cases where respondents noted all answers that apply, percentages are not noted. Teachers reported certification as a teacher of students with EBD ($n = 100$), general or cross-categorical special educator ($n = 94$), and elementary educator ($n = 93$). Also, teachers identified having certification as a secondary educator ($n = 27$), other certification (e.g., counselor, early childhood) ($n = 63$), or no certification ($n = 4$). Additionally, 80 teachers reported having more than one certification.

Principal Characteristics

Principal respondents were primarily in the age ranges of 46-55 years ($n = 128$, 47.8%) and 56 years or older ($n = 61$, 22.8%). Fewer principals were ages 25 or younger ($n = 1$, 0.4%), 26-35 ($n = 24$, 9.0%), or 36-45 ($n = 54$, 20.1%). Also, more female ($n = 148$, 55.2%) than male ($n = 120$, 44.8%) professionals held these jobs. Most principals had been in their current school five years or less ($n = 133$, 49.8%) or 6-10 years ($n = 62$, 23.2%). Slightly more principals had been at their current school 11-15 years ($n = 58$, 21.7%), than 16 years or greater ($n = 35$, 13.1%). Most had been school administrators five years or less ($n = 80$, 30.0%) and somewhat fewer 6-10 years ($n = 59$, 22.1%), 11-15 years ($n = 58$, 21.7%), or 16 or more years ($n = 70$, 26.2%).

Principals most commonly held master's degrees ($n = 214$, 81.1%) or doctoral degrees ($n = 26$, 9.8%). Fewer principals had bachelor's degrees ($n = 17$, 6.4%) or completed post-doctoral study ($n = 7$, 2.7%). The most common certifications were principal, administrator, or supervisor ($n = 177$), special education teachers of students with EBD ($n = 113$), and special education teachers with general or cross categorical emphasis ($n = 102$). Fewer principals held certification as an elementary education teacher ($n = 91$), secondary education teacher ($n = 74$), or other certification (e.g., counselor, early childhood) ($n = 76$). Additionally, principals reported having multiple certifications ($n = 199$) and no certifications ($n = 6$).

Student Characteristics

Principals were asked to respond to questions about students in the first through sixth grade of their school. Data are organized

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into two categories: (a) involvement of outside; certain questions, sums example, principals id. However, a total of 5,35 student ethnicity.

Enrollment and serv indicated that 10% or enrolled solely for an ev enrolled solely for an ev 26-50% ($n = 4$, 1.5%), 51. Principals also reported the state in which the set in which the school was students were enrolled other (i.e., multiple dist 39, 14.8%). Principals nc were most commonly ei two years ($n = 49$, 38.9%) programs for three year five years ($n = 9$, 7.1%). I were frequently enrollee ($n = 81$, 35.2%) or three reported student length five years ($n = 25$, 10.8%), percent of students that common ranges were 81 students ($n = 63$, 23.7%). The other two ranges of s ($n = 39$) of principal resp

Principals were ask for four enrollment class (c) ethnicity; and (d) genc that students enrolled w African American ($n = 1$ responses, 4,350 of the female. Additionally, a to in day treatment and at Principals also provided with various disability students receiving specic The most common spec disturbance ($n = 4,355$).

into two categories: (a) enrollment and services received, and (b) involvement of outside agencies. Because respondents did not answer certain questions, sums across questions may not be consistent. For example, principals identified a total of 8,315 students enrolled. However, a total of 5,335 students were represented in responses to student ethnicity.

Enrollment and services received. Most principals ($n = 224$, 85.2%) indicated that 10% or fewer of the students at their facility were enrolled solely for an evaluation. Fewer principals reported students enrolled solely for an evaluation in the ranges of 11-25% ($n = 12$, 4.6), 26-50% ($n = 4$, 1.5%), 51-75% ($n = 3$, 1.1%), or 76-100% ($n = 20$, 7.6%). Principals also reported that most students were enrolled from across the state in which the school was located ($n = 115$, 43.7%) or the district in which the school was located ($n = 73$, 27.8%). Some principals noted students were enrolled from more than one state ($n = 36$, 13.7%) or other (i.e., multiple districts within a state, multiple counties) ($n = 39$, 14.8%). Principals noted that students in the residential program were most commonly enrolled for one year or less ($n = 50$, 39.7%) or two years ($n = 49$, 38.9%). Fewer students were enrolled in residential programs for three years ($n = 16$, 12.7%), four years ($n = 2$, 1.6%), or five years ($n = 9$, 7.1%). In contrast, students in day treatment schools were frequently enrolled for 1 year or less ($n = 50$, 21.7%), two years ($n = 81$, 35.2%) or three years ($n = 54$, 23.5%). Some principals also reported student length of enrollment as four years ($n = 20$, 8.7%) or five years ($n = 25$, 10.8%). Principals also had varied responses to the percent of students that exited to less restrictive settings. The most common ranges were 81-100% of students ($n = 70$, 26.3%), 61-80% of students ($n = 63$, 23.7%), and 20% or fewer students ($n = 55$, 20.7%). The other two ranges of students, 21-40% and 41-60%, both had 14.7% ($n = 39$) of principal responses.

Principals were asked to write in a specific number of students for four enrollment classifications: (a) day treatment; (b) residential; (c) ethnicity; and (d) gender (see Table 1). Principal responses revealed that students enrolled were predominantly Caucasian ($n = 2,908$) or African American ($n = 1,675$). Additionally, based on all principal responses, 4,350 of the students enrolled were male versus 1,168 female. Additionally, a total of 6,413 students were reportedly enrolled in day treatment and another 1,902 enrolled in residential schools. Principals also provided information about the number of students with various disability classifications. There were a total of 5,850 students receiving special education services in responding schools. The most common special education classification was emotional disturbance ($n = 4,355$).

Table 1
Student Enrollment and Services Received

Student Characteristic	Number of Respondents	Maximum	Mean	Median	Mode	Sum
Day treatment	218	148	29.42	21.00	25	6413
Residential	93	68	20.45	16.00	6	1902
Hispanic	229	19	2.14	1.00	0	451
African American	229	55	8.97	4.00	0	1675
Asian	229	4	0.24	0.00	0	45
Caucasian	229	62	14.29	11.00	6	2908
Native American	229	20	0.40	0.00	0	65
Biracial	227	10	0.91	0.00	0	191
Female	233	48	5.57	3.00	0	1168
Male	232	87	21.56	17.00	6	4350
Special Education	230	100	25.43	21.00	25	5850
LD	232	30	2.04	0.00	0	473
EBD	232	87	18.77	15.00	0	4355
MR	232	42	2.09	0.00	0	484
Other Sped. Classification	232	71	3.93	0.00	0	911

Note. Other special education classification = all categories not represented in the table; LD = learning disability; EBD = emotional/behavioral disorder; MR = mental retardation; Accom. = accommodations; Sped. = special education.

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Involvement of outside
the involvement of students
(a) previous or current
involvement with juvenile
and (c) current involvement
Specifically, 35.0% (n = 82)
with previous or current
frequent principal response
(n = 60, 22.6%) of student
51-75% (n = 27, 10.2%),
= 5, 1.9%). Similarly, no
current involvement in the
(n = 188, 70.4%). The new
involvement due to delinquency
also reported 26-50% (n = 67,
n = 7, 2.6%). Principals also
with current involvement
in need of supervision (n = 25,
with the juvenile justice system
25% (n = 46, 17.5%) was
26-50% (n = 21, 8.0%), 5
4.9%). Noteworthy, we were
unaware of whether the student
system due to need for supervision
that did not know if student
delinquency.

Student Characteristics Across

Student characteristics
program characteristics:
residential, combined
organizational structure
private for-profit school
number of students: (a) 1
LD; (c) with ED; (d) with
(f) Caucasian; (g) African
American; (k) male; (l) female
were conducted on educational
student characteristics. It
were noted for group membership
structure.

For questions that
square analyses were conducted
differences between program

Involvement of outside agencies. Principals were also asked about the involvement of students in grades 1-6 with outside agencies: (a) previous or current involvement with foster care; (b) current involvement with juvenile justice due to being in need of supervision; and (c) current involvement with juvenile justice due to delinquency. Specifically, 35.0% ($n = 93$) of schools had 10% or fewer students with previous or current involvement in foster care. The next most frequent principal responses were 11-25% ($n = 62$, 23.3%) and 26-50% ($n = 60$, 22.6%) of students involved in foster care. Less frequent were 51-75% ($n = 27$, 10.2%), 76-100% ($n = 19$, 7.1%), and don't know ($n = 5$, 1.9%). Similarly, most schools had 10% or fewer students with current involvement in the juvenile justice system due to delinquency ($n = 188$, 70.4%). The next most common range of students with involvement due to delinquency was 11-25% ($n = 33$, 12.4%). Principals also reported 26-50% ($n = 22$, 8.2%), 51-75% ($n = 5$, 1.9%), and 76-100% ($n = 7$, 2.6%). Principals also commonly reported 10% or fewer students with current involvement in the juvenile justice system due to being in need of supervision ($n = 162$, 61.6%). Similarly, for youth involved with the juvenile justice system because they needed supervision, 11-25% ($n = 46$, 17.5%) was the next most common range, followed by 26-50% ($n = 21$, 8.0%), 51-75% ($n = 13$, 4.9%), and 76-100% ($n = 13$, 4.9%). Noteworthy, were the 4.6% ($n = 12$) of principals who were unaware of whether students were involved with the juvenile justice system due to need for supervision and the 4.5% ($n = 12$) of principals that did not know if students were involved in juvenile justice due to delinquency.

Student Characteristics Across Educational Program

Student characteristics were compared across two educational program characteristics: (a) type of services offered (day treatment, residential, combined day treatment and residential); and (b) organizational structure (public school, private non-profit school, private for-profit school). The variables with interval data were number of students: (a) receiving special education services; (b) with LD; (c) with ED; (d) with MR; (e) with other disability classification; (f) Caucasian; (g) African American; (h) Hispanic; (i) Asian; (j) Native American; (k) male; (l) female. Independent *t*-test or ANOVA analyses were conducted on educational program characteristics and the student characteristics listed. No statistically significant differences were noted for group means across type of service or organizational structure.

For questions that resulted in nominal or ordinal data, chi-square analyses were conducted to identify any statistically significant differences between proportions. Specifically, the areas considered

Table 2
Student Characteristics and Organizational Structure

Characteristics	No. (%)			Significance		
	Public	Private Non-Profit	Other	df	χ^2	p
Students Served				4	45.082	.000
From Within District	52 (20.3)	12 (4.7)	6 (2.3)			
From Within State	28 (10.9)	66 (25.8)	19 (7.4)			
Other	27 (10.5)	35 (13.7)	11 (4.3)			
Length of Enrollment in Day treatment				2	3.184	.204
1 Year or Less	26 (11.5)	17 (7.6)	6 (2.7)			
2 Years or More	69 (30.8)	84 (37.5)	22 (9.8)			
Length of Enrollment in Residential				2	7.907	.204
1 Year or Less	23 (18.5)	17 (13.7)	8 (6.5)			
2 Years or More	19 (15.3)	45 (36.3)	12 (9.7)			
Previous or Current Involvement in Foster Care				6	7.605	.268
10% or less	41 (16.1)	38 (15.0)	11 (4.3)			
11-25%	27 (10.6)	25 (9.8)	8 (3.1)			
26-50%	19 (7.5)	35 (13.8)	6 (2.4)			
51% or more	19 (7.5)	16 (6.3)	9 (3.5)			

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Characteristics	No. (%)			Significance		
	Public	Private Non-Profit	Other	df	χ^2	p
Current Involvement in Juvenile Justice – In Need of Supervision				6	3.320	.768
10% or less	62 (25.3)	72 (28.4)	25 (10.0)			

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Characteristics	No. (%)			Significance		
	Public	Private Non-Profit	Other	df	χ^2	p
Current Involvement in Juvenile Justice --						
In Need of Supervision				6	3.320	.768
10% or less	62 (25.3)	72 (29.4)	25 (10.2)			
11-25%	21 (8.6)	20 (8.2)	4 (1.6)			
26-50%	10 (4.1)	7 (2.9)	2 (0.8)			
51% or more	11 (4.5)	8 (3.3)	3 (1.2)			
Current Involvement in Juvenile Justice --						
Delinquency				6	9.459	.149
10% or less	73 (29.3)	83 (33.3)	29 (11.6)			
11-25%	19 (7.6)	11 (4.4)	1 (0.4)			
26-50%	11 (4.4)	6 (2.4)	4 (1.6)			
51% or more	4 (1.6)	7 (2.8)	1 (0.4)			

NOTE : Other = private for - profit school, public school in a private facility, state program, contracted school with the public school, other organizational structure.

were length of enrollment in day treatment, length of enrollment in residential, area from where students were served (i.e., within district, within state, other), and involvement of outside agencies (i.e., juvenile justice-in need of supervision, juvenile justice-delinquency, foster care). A statistically significant difference was noted for area from where students were served across organizational structure (public, private non-profit, other) ($\chi^2 = 45.082, 4, p < .01$) (see Table 2).² Results indicated that public school programs most often served students from within district ($n = 52, 20.3\%$) and private non-profit schools frequently served students from within the state in which the school was located ($n = 66, 25.8\%$).

Two comparisons of student characteristics were statistically significant for types of school (day treatment, residential, combined day treatment and residential) based on principal responses (see Table 3). A statistically significant difference was noted for student population served and school types ($\chi^2 = 44.047, 4, p < .01$). More students from within district were enrolled in day treatment ($n = 66, 25.4\%$). In contrast, residential ($n = 26, 10.0\%$) and combined day and residential ($n = 37, 14.2\%$) schools more commonly served students from across the state in which the school is located. Also statistically significant was the proportion of students with previous or current involvement in foster care and school type ($\chi^2 = 48.681, 8, p < .01$). Most day treatment schools had 10% or fewer students involved in foster care ($n = 69, 26.7\%$), while residential schools more commonly had 26-50% of students involved in foster care ($n = 10, 3.9\%$). Combined day and residential schools more commonly had 26-50% of students with foster care involvement ($n = 16, 6.2\%$).

Discussion

This study provides a national picture of student, teacher, and principal characteristics in elementary day treatment and residential schools that serve students with EBD. Although this study did not focus on direct links between student and educator characteristics and student outcomes, several indicators should be considered as possible risk factors or factors that may promote student academic and behavioral success and be noted in future research.

Teachers

Within the current study, teachers in day treatment and residential schools were largely female and evenly distributed across several age ranges. Female teachers outnumbered male teachers by a ratio of approximately 3:1. This is generally consistent with other research on teachers of students with EBD (Clark-Chiarelli & Singer, 1995), as well as national studies on general and special educators (Westat, 2002a).

Table 3
Student Characteristics and School Type

Characteristics	No. (%)			Significance	
	Day Treatment	Residential	Day Treatment and Residential	df	χ^2 p
Students Served From Within District	66 (25.4)	--	5 (1.9)	4	44.047 .000

Table 3
Student Characteristics and School Type

Characteristics	No. (%)			Significance		
	Day Treatment	Residential	Day Treatment and Residential	df	χ^2	P
Students Served						
From Within District	66 (25.4)	--	5 (1.9)	4	44.047	.000
From Within State	52 (20.0)	26 (10.0)	37 (14.2)			
Other	43 (16.5)	14 (5.4)	17 (6.5)			
Length of Enrollment in Day Treatment						
1 Year or Less	28 (14.5)	--	14 (7.3)	1	.929	.335
2 Years or More	112 (58.0)	--	39 (20.2)			
Length of Enrollment in Residential						
1 Year or Less	--	21 (22.8)	17 (18.5)	1	6.096	.014
2 Years or More	--	16 (17.4)	38 (41.3)			
Previous or Current Involvement in Foster Care						
10% or less	69 (26.7)	7 (2.7)	15 (5.8)	8	48.681	.000
11-25%	48 (18.6)	4 (1.6)	9 (3.5)			
26-50%	34 (13.2)	10 (3.9)	16 (6.2)			
51-75%	10 (3.9)	6 (2.3)	11 (4.3)			
76-100%	2 (0.8)	9 (3.5)	8 (3.1)			

NOTE: Other = from within state and other states, any other configuration.

However, the issue of teacher gender may have greater implications for students enrolled in day treatment and residential schools; particularly given the high percentage of male students in those settings. While females play an important role in youth development, access to positive male role models in these settings is also important (Doud & Keller, 1998).

Approximately 1/3 of teachers in this study had been teaching five years or less and over 1/2 of the teachers had been at their current school five years or less. Researchers have noted the link between teacher effectiveness and experience (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2000). However, the data in the current study are generally consistent with the tenure of teachers of students with EBD (Carlson, Lee, & Willig, 2002). Unfortunately, there is a nationwide shortage of almost 6,000 teachers for students with EBD (Advocacy in Action, 1995; Wald, 1996) and teachers of students with EBD have the highest attrition rate of any group of special educators (Koyanagi & Gaines, 1993; Lauritzen & Friedman, 1991; Lawrenson & McKinnon, 1982) or general educators (Boe, Bobbit, & Cook, 1997). Additional research could shed light on the high percentage of new teachers in these schools.

Certification and educational background also provide information as to the preparedness of teachers to instruct elementary students with EBD in day treatment and residential schools. About half of responding teachers had bachelors degrees, while the other half had masters degrees. This is generally consistent with teachers of students with EBD, special educators, and general educators (Westat, 2002c). Additionally, teachers commonly noted certification as teacher for students with EBD, cross-categorical special education, and elementary education. Only four teachers had no certification and about one-third of the teachers had more than one certification. These facts provide a slightly more positive picture than earlier studies (Grosenick, George, & George, 1987; Morse Cutler, & Fink, 1964) that reported teachers of students in EBD programs were essentially unprepared to teach those children. However, the current study did not ask teachers if they held emergency or probationary certification. While many teachers were certified to teach students with EBD and had master's degrees, additional research should consider the requirements of current EBD programs, certification requirements, and details of state licensure examinations for these teachers. In light of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), it is critical for all teachers to develop an understanding of academic content, achievement standards, and effective instructional strategies (Educational Policy Reform Research Institute, 2003; McLaughlin, 2000).

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Principals

The current study principals in day treatment and residential schools were slightly more than half of these profession of principals were 56 years of age or less. In general, there are about 10,000 principals in day treatment and residential schools is generally consistent with the current study (2003). Given the over 10,000 principals in day treatment and residential schools, it is not surprising that there are a relatively high percentage of principals in day treatment and residential schools who have access to care that may have less information as to the needs of students with EBD.

Principal educational background and certification information as to the preparedness of principals to instruct elementary students with EBD in day treatment and residential schools was also collected. About half of responding principals had bachelors degrees, while the other half had masters degrees. This is generally consistent with principals of students with EBD, special educators, and general educators (Westat, 2002c). Additionally, principals commonly noted certification as principal, administrative, and educational as their qualifications to teach students with EBD. However, the current study did not ask principals if they held emergency or probationary certification. While many principals were certified to teach students with EBD and had master's degrees, additional research should consider the requirements of current EBD programs, certification requirements, and details of state licensure examinations for these principals. In light of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), it is critical for all principals to develop an understanding of academic content, achievement standards, and effective instructional strategies (Educational Policy Reform Research Institute, 2003; McLaughlin, 2000).

Students

Results indicated that the current study students in day treatment and residential schools were slightly more than half of these students were 10 years of age or less. In general, there are about 10,000 students in day treatment and residential schools who have access to care that may have less information as to the needs of students with EBD.

Principals

The current study provides an initial look at the characteristics of principals in day treatment and residential schools on a national level. There were slightly more female than male principals and almost half of these professionals were in the 46-55 age range. Another 23% of principals were 56 years or older. Compared to public schools in general, there are about 11% more female principals in day treatment and residential schools (Gates et al., 2003). However, the average age is generally consistent with principals in public schools (Gates et al., 2003). Given the overwhelming number of female teachers and the relatively high percentage of female principals, it is important that youth have access to both male and female role models (Doud & Keller, 1998). This is particularly essential for children in residential care that may have less frequent contact with their parents.

Principal education and certification provides important information as to the preparedness of the professionals to work with this population. A majority of principals in day treatment and residential schools held master's degrees and most principals had some type of educational certification. The most common certifications were principal, administrator, or supervisor, followed by special education teachers of students with EBD, and general or cross-categorical special education teachers. Clearly, principals in day treatment and residential schools have education and certification that supports their qualifications to assist students and teachers within this school setting. However, as Roza, et al. (2003) noted, there are limitations to the use of these factors to assess principal competence. Certification and educational attainment do not provide information on leadership and interpersonal skills.

Students

Results indicated that students served in the day treatment and residential schools most commonly were male and came from across the state in which the school was located. Fewer schools served students solely from the school district in which the school was located. Also, there was an overrepresentation of African American students and an underrepresentation of Asian and Hispanic students among children attending these schools. The most common lengths of enrollment for students in day treatment were from two to three years. In contrast, students were commonly enrolled in residential schools for one year or less. Importantly, principals reported that most students exit the day treatment or residential school and go to a less restrictive school setting.

11% or more of youth at their schools were involved with the juvenile justice system because they needed supervision. Student involvement with multiple agencies requires systemized collaboration and sharing of data. Exchange of records between educational and juvenile correctional organizations is a longstanding problem that requires attention (Gagnon & Mayer, 2004).

Limitations

The current data on teacher, principal, and student characteristics provides valuable information for educators, policymakers, and parents. However, there are limitations regarding the depth of information possible from a national survey and additional research is needed. While this study provided information on a national representative sample of children in the most restrictive educational settings, descriptions of student characteristics were obtained solely from principal reports, a practice widely used by federal and state agencies. However, subsequent research should verify principal reports with a review of school, local education agency, and state documents of student characteristics in elementary day treatment and residential schools. Another limitation is the response rate for the survey. Researchers (Weisberg, Krosnick, & Bowen, 1989) acknowledge that 50% is an acceptable response rate for mail surveys. While only one minor difference (i.e., school type) existed between respondents and non-respondents, a response rate higher than the 56.45% obtained from principals in this study would provide more robust findings.

Implications

The current investigation is the first national picture of students, teachers, and principals in day treatment and residential schools for elementary students with EBD. While the study provides answers to basic questions about who is served and by whom, a number of other issues are raised. For example, while the level of teacher and principal education and certification is encouraging, the high percentage of principals and teachers with limited experience is a significant issue. Ongoing and comprehensive teacher and principal in-service training may be necessary to ensure continuity of educational and behavioral programming and address the needs of students who enter day treatment from many different school districts. Because students are in day treatment and residential schools for significant periods of time and commonly exit to less restrictive settings, it is also critical that school-level policies align with state policies. For students to successfully reintegrate into public or home schools, they must be provided an education that is consistent with public school

expectations and the requirements of No Child Left Behind (2001). However, there is some indication that many day treatment and residential school curriculum, assessment, and accountability policies are not aligned with states (Gagnon & McLaughlin, 2004).

This study also documents that even among elementary-school students, there is a relatively high level of involvement with foster care and juvenile corrections. This requires cooperation and information sharing between agencies and programs so that student needs are adequately communicated and addressed. Such collaboration must be institutionalized via specific agency policies to ensure that students involved in more than one agency are guaranteed coordinated and comprehensive services. Finally, the study also documents the ongoing and persistent disproportionate representation of African American students and males in the most restrictive settings available for special education services. A better understanding of the decision-making process and family and community factors associated with those placement decisions would help professionals, advocates, and family members respond to disproportionate placement.

Conclusions

This study provides much needed information about the characteristics of elementary students identified as having EBD and served in day treatment and residential settings and those who educate them. The current data allow for an initial look at principal and teacher qualifications and experience, as well as student characteristics (e.g., involvement with foster care, juvenile justice systems) that may have an effect on student academic and behavioral success. With this information, and the understanding that these students typically return to a less restrictive setting, we can begin the process of identifying necessary supports for students, and effective policies and practices.

Notes

- 1 School type and organizational structure were defined differently in the commercial database than on the survey.
- 2 In this Chi-square comparison, to assure an expected value of five values within the two variables were collapsed. For example, "Other" was used to describe the organizational structures of private for-profit and other settings (e.g., contracted school of the public school, educational collaborative, public non-profit). Similarly, students served from the state in which the school was located and other states were combined with other structures including multiple districts and multiple counties.

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