

Utah Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS)
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT
Cache County School District
May 27, 2009

The attached report contains the results of the first two phases (Self-Assessment Process and On-Site Validation Visit) of the Utah Special Education Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS).

This Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process is conducted by the Utah State Office of Education (USOE) Special Education Services (SES), as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B. The process is designed to focus resources on improving results for students with disabilities through enhanced partnerships between charter school and district programs, USOE-SES, the Utah Personnel Development Center, parents, and advocates.

The first phase of this process included the development of a Program Improvement Plan. The second phase, On-Site Validation, conducted in Cache County School District on February 17-18, 2009 included student record reviews and school site visits. Parent surveys were also mailed to a small sample of parents.

This report contains a more complete description of the process utilized to collect data and to determine strengths, areas out of compliance with the requirements of IDEA, and recommendations for improvement in each of the core IDEA areas.

Areas of Strength

The validation team found the following:

General Supervision

- Related service providers are involved in and frequently attend IEP meetings.
- Related service providers are very familiar with state special education rules and regulations.
- Special education teachers genuinely care about the students they serve.
- Files were stored in a secured environment with Record of Access forms in all files and Access Authorization lists posted.
- Files are well organized with consistent filing system utilized throughout the district.
- Evaluation results were generally summarized into a written report.
- A variety of assessment tools were used, including informal assessments and input from parents.
- Eligibility Determinations were current and determined by a team of professionals and parents.
- Completed and signed referral forms were present in all files, including documentation of Tier II interventions.
- District uses Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and technology to provide ongoing professional development.
- Strong and positive support provided by school and district administrators.
- Schools have a very inclusive attitude toward students with disabilities and welcoming atmosphere as documented through observations and interviews of school staff.
- Students with disabilities were included in all activities, including extracurricular activities.
- Initial evaluations are conducted within 45 school days of receiving parent consent.
- The IEP team that includes the parents, reviews existing evaluation data and determines whether additional data are needed for determining continuing eligibility.

Parent Involvement

- Teachers provide parents with regular reports of their student's progress toward IEP goals.
- Parents report opportunities to provide input regarding their student's education and that their input was respectfully considered.
- Parents report that all of their student's needs were addressed during the IEP meeting.

- Parents report that general education teachers are aware of their student's needs.
- Parents report services listed on the IEP are being provided and their students are making progress toward IEP goals.
- Parents report that related service providers regularly consult with parents and general education teachers.
- Documentation that parents were provided with their Procedural Safeguards is included in all reviewed student special education files.
- Parents reported they understood Procedural Safeguards and had them explained to them.
- Written prior notice of initial and continuing eligibility is included in student files.
- Documentation of written prior notice of IEP implementation is included in student files.
- Interpreters were provided when appropriate, as were forms in other languages and at times translations of IEP content.
- Foster parents were involved in IEP meetings, when appropriate.
- Parents, during the parent focus group, stated they were given opportunities to give input during evaluation and IEP meetings.
- Parents reported that IEP meetings were scheduled at mutually agreeable times.
- Prior notice and consent to excuse IEP team members was documented when needed.
- Parents reported that they were given opportunities to provide input at times other than IEP meetings.
- Parents reported frequent communication between home and school through Power School system.
- Parents are provided copies of the IEP as documented by signatures on the IEP.
- Consent for initial placement is included all files reviewed.
- Consent for evaluation/reevaluation was documented all files reviewed.
- Prior Written Notice was provided to parents if the student's placement was changed.

Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment

- Extra assistance is often supplied to students with social/behavioral difficulties.
- General education teachers are willing to have students with disabilities in their classrooms.
- General education teachers provide individualized instruction in the classroom.
- Special education teachers provide direction to general education teachers regarding testing accommodations.
- Students report that general and special education teachers consistently provide accommodations in the classroom.
- Students report participation in a wide variety of school-sponsored activities of their choice, including extracurricular activities.
- Majority of students understood the IEP meeting and were comfortable attending their IEP meeting.
- Current IEPs are included in all student files.
- IEP contains a statement of measurable academic and functional goals.
- Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPS) are well written and include visual representations of data.
- Measureable goals address all areas of need as described in the Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) statement.
- PLAAFP statements include how the disability affects involvement/progress in the general curriculum.
- For students participating in the UAA, a description of benchmarks or short-term objectives is included in the IEP.
- IEP team included special education provider, LEA representative, general education teacher, a person who could interpret instructional implications and others as appropriate.
- IEPs contain a description of how the student's progress toward meeting the annual goals will be measured and when periodic reports on progress will be provided to parents.
- Assistive technology is used in schools to assist students in participating in the general curriculum, as observed during classroom observations and reported by school staff.
- Continuum of placement options are available and utilized as reported by school staff.

- IEPs contain an explanation of extent to which student will not participate with non-disabled peers.
- IEPs contain projected date for beginning of services.
- IEP team addressed need for positive behavioral supports and language needs for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students.
- Teachers ensure students with disabilities are given opportunities to participate in all activities, including having special education staff attend field trips.
- IEP contains related services and a statement of program modifications or supports that will be provided for the student.
- Peer tutor program allows students with disabilities to receive support alongside their non-disabled peers.

Transitions

3-to-3

- IEPs are in place by the student's 3rd birthday.
- Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) are included in student special education files.
- Utah Preschool Outcome Data (UPOD) forms are complete and included in student files.
- Parents were provided with Procedural Safeguards at Part C to Part B transition meetings as documented on the referral form.
- Teachers report support from district pre-school coordinator.
- LEA representative was invited to and participated in transition planning meeting.

School to Post School

- Parents report discussing transition services at IEP meetings.
- Post-high program is based on the Utah State University campus.
- Secondary teachers have participated in professional development addressing transition planning.
- Transition plans contained post-secondary employment goals and independent living goals where appropriate.
- IEPs contain annual IEP goals that will reasonable enable the student to meet the post-secondary goals.
- Transition plans include a course of study designed to improve the student academic and functional achievement and achievement of post-secondary goals.
- Beginning not later than on e year before the student's 18th birthday, the student was informed that rights will transfer to him/her when he/she reaches the age of 18.

Disproportionality

- Interpreters attended eligibility and IEP meetings as documented by signatures on forms.
- Primary Home Language and race/ethnicity are documented in files.
- English proficiency assessments were in included in files when appropriate.

Areas of Systemic Noncompliance*

- Reevaluation timelines not met in 26.9% of applicable reviewed files.
- Evaluations were not sufficiently comprehensive to identify the student's special education and related service needs in 4% of applicable reviewed files.
- Student did not meet the eligibility criteria of one of the disability categories in 18% of applicable reviewed files:
 - Multiple Disabilities
 - Use of augmented and assistive communication and motor systems were not documented in 20% of applicable reviewed files.
 - Sensory motor areas were not considered in 20% of applicable reviewed files.
 - Vision and hearing were not assessed in 20% of applicable reviewed files.

- Specific Learning Disabilities
 - No discrepancy data were included in 7% of applicable reviewed files.
 - Data that demonstrated that student is provided appropriate instruction in general education classroom missing in 35% of applicable reviewed files.
 - Data documenting repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals which was provided to parents missing in 35% of applicable reviewed files.
 - Observation of the student's academic performance and behavior missing in 35% of applicable reviewed files.
 - Documentation of student's relevant behavior noted during the observation missing in 35% of applicable reviewed files.
 - Statement that the student does not achieve adequately for age or grade-level standards missing in 21.4% of applicable reviewed files.
 - Statement that student does not make sufficient progress or demonstrates a significant discrepancy between achievement and ability missing in 15% of applicable reviewed files.
- Notice of Meeting for eligibility determination missing in 11% of applicable reviewed files.
- Notice of Meeting for IEP meeting missing in 16% of applicable reviewed files.
- Notice of Meeting for placement review missing in 12% of applicable reviewed files.
- No documentation that parents were provided with a copy of Evaluation Summary report in 3% of applicable reviewed files.
- No documentation that parents were given a copy of Eligibility Determination Documentation in 2% of applicable reviewed files.
- No documentation of written prior notice provided to parents regarding ESY goals, services and the amount of time to be provided in 2% of applicable reviewed files.
- Initial IEP not developed within 30 days following eligibility determination in 9% of applicable reviewed files.
- PLAAFP statement does not include baseline or current data in 2% of applicable reviewed files.
- Documentation of accommodations necessary for the student to participate in state-wide assessments missing in 16% of applicable reviewed files.
- Specific special education services not listed on the IEP in 2% of applicable reviewed files.
- Communication addressed on IEP, but not selected as a special factor in 2% of applicable reviewed files.
- IEP not reviewed or revised periodically, not less than annually in 29% of applicable reviewed files.
- Placement not reviewed or revised periodically, not less than annually in 33% of applicable reviewed files.
- Documentation of parent participation in the IEP as documented by signatures missing in 2% of applicable reviewed files.
- Documentation that a transition age student was invited to the IEP meeting missing in 8% of applicable reviewed files.
- Documentation that the student has PE available missing in 3.6% of applicable reviewed files.
- Documentation that placement decision was appropriately made missing in 4% of applicable reviewed files. ("Curricular content not appropriate" cannot be the only reason for selecting placement).
- Transitions plans did not contain evidence of post-secondary training or education goals in 8% of applicable reviewed files.
- No documentation that measurable post-secondary goals were based on age-appropriate transition assessments in 8% of applicable reviewed files.

- Transition services were not documented as follows:
 - Community experiences—16% of applicable reviewed files.
 - Employment—10% of applicable reviewed files.
 - Post-school adult living objectives—16% of applicable reviewed files.
 - Acquisition of daily living skills—16% of applicable reviewed files.
 - Functional vocational evaluation—16% of applicable reviewed files.
- Agency representative was not invited to the IEP meeting in 8% of applicable reviewed files.
- Parent or adult student consent to invite an agency representative was not obtained in 8% of applicable reviewed files.

**These areas represent items where the visiting team could not locate appropriate documentation of requirements of IDEA 2004 and Utah State Special Education Rules in student records or other data sources.*