Utah Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT PROVO SCHOOL DISTRICT February 25, 2008

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 Provo School District on November 13-14, 2007, included student record reviews, interviews with school administrators, teachers, and parents. 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

- Training of data collection team facilitated a cohesive evaluation team and made sure that files were reviewed in a consistent manner.
- Teachers learned more about the monitoring process and the contents of the special education files.
- A compliance team was established and trained.
- Most special education teachers are eager to have their blue folders in compliance and do what is required by IDEA 04.
- Special education teachers are involved in professional development and looking for ways to improve their teaching skills.
- Findings of off-site and on-site data were shared with all lead coordinators and steering committee members. There is a meeting where information gathered is reviewed and it is posted on the district website.
- An audit team trained by the USOE visited every school and reviewed 106 special education files.
- Special Programs provides service supports to each school by means of mentors, behavior support, and a leadership team.
- Trained Lead Coordinators are at each site, and professional development for special educators is provided.
- Each special education teacher, as well as some para-educators, is provided with a laptop computer.
- District has adopted the GoalView electronic IEP format.
- A team of trained para-educators is assigned to each school to assist with the special education audit.
- State defined core curriculum and standards for mastery will be used.
- Focus on achievement results by investing in new research-based reading intervention programs.
- Collaboration with district curriculum department to ensure adopted curriculum has documented success with students with disabilities.
- Reevaluations are completed within the timeline.
- Evaluation and eligibility procedures were followed.
- Provo School District serves all students with disabilities who qualify for special education services.
- Record of Access included in special education files. They were consistently located in a specific folder (documents) included in the special education file in each school.
- Files were stored in lockable filing cabinets.

- School team members discussed ongoing teamwork and collaboration at each school site during interviews. In addition, parents also described school collaboration efforts during the parent focus group.
- Evidence of communication assessments in Spanish and English were included in applicable elementary files.
- Oak Springs and Independence High School use surrogate parents for students who are in state custody, when appropriate.
- Pre-service teachers are utilized in some school settings to provide some assessments, instructional support, and serve as volunteers, which provide additional support for teachers.
- Student data from interventions are documented prior to referrals for special education.
- General education teachers are invited to attend special education professional development, and expressed appreciation for their training opportunities.
- Provo SD emails available professional development opportunities to school staff, who may then
 choose to attend.
- Some school sites provide additional services to at-risk students, using paraprofessionals to provide additional reading instruction.
- Some elementary schools provide weekly training for school staff on instructional methods for English language learners.
- General education teachers are informed on IEP contents through binders, requests for input, and being provided with copies of goals.
- Teachers described using U-PASS data to make instructional decisions. Some used the data for referrals and documented the consideration of the data during team meetings.
- When revising the Policy and Procedures Manual, Provo School District plans on inviting school administrators and special education personnel to provide input and assist in the development.
- Lead Coordinators are provided with a district-developed handbook. They receive training and are expected to disseminate the information to their school team.
- Provo School District provides strong administrative support to school staff. The support
 originates at the District Office, from the Superintendent and Board of Education, and is facilitated
 by the Special Education Director, Coordinators, and mentors.
- Review of existing data is documented fro reevaluations and some initial evaluations.
- Eligibility determinations are current and included in special education files.
- School improvement efforts include provisions for students with disabilities.
- General education teachers, when interviewed, were knowledgeable about the school referral
 process and the interventions attempted with struggling students. A three tier response to
 intervention (RTI) process is beginning to be implemented prior to referrals for special education
 evaluation. As part of that process, updated special education forms have been designed to
 collect ongoing intervention data prior to a referral.
- Special education teachers have received district support in the form of paraprofessional assistance, training, and substitute teachers to assist them with maintaining special education documentation.
- Mentoring support is provided to beginning teachers and teachers on letters of authorization (LOA).
- Students, during student focus groups, described an IEP and how special education services have assisted them in improving in school.
- An intervention map for students with disabilities has been designed by Provo School District special education staff to illustrate a hierarchy special education support and intervention, as well as general education and special education staff responsibility.
- During classroom observations, specialized instruction and accommodations were provided as per IEPs. Observers noted positive reinforcement, an individualized math program, assistive technology, direct instruction, extended response time, and teacher prompting during observations in general education and special education classrooms.

Parent Involvement

- Parents are generally pleased with the special education services that their students are receiving.
- Most parents are pleased with the IEP process and are informed of IEP meetings and their parental rights.

- Parents indicated that their students were getting all of the services listed on the IEP.
- There was parent representation at every steering committee meeting; parents were involved in reviewing data, discussing strengths and weaknesses, and determining future needs.
- District will expect parental involvement and parental support of remediation efforts.
- Parents of elementary students generally reported that positive responses on the parent survey questions.
- School personnel reported encouraging positive relationships with parents.
- Some IEPs forms in Spanish were included in files.
- School staff reported using email and PowerSchool to communicate with parents.
- Parent signatures were included on required forms. One file included documentation that parents had signed an IEP translated into Spanish language.
- Parent contacts are documented in special education files.
- Parents received copies of IEPs, Eligibility Determinations, and Placement decisions, as documented by signatures.
- IEPs addressed how progress will be measured and reported to parents, as documented during file reviews.
- Progress reports on IEP goals were included in special education files and addressed on student IEPs.
- Signed parent consent for initial placement and evaluation were included in special education files
- Special education files contained evidence of written prior notice for proposed actions regarding evaluation, eligibility determination, IEP implementation, placement review, and change of placement.
- Parents receive Procedural Safeguards, as documented by their signatures and statements during the parent focus group.
- Notice of Meetings were generally complete for initial meetings.
- Provo SD has scheduled training for parents of students with disabilities.
- Parents are included in team meetings in person, as well as by phone. Participation by any
 means is documented within special education files. Parental input is encouraged, documented,
 and listened to, as documented within special education files, staff interviews, and parent
 statements.
- IEPs are scheduled at a mutually agreeable time, as reported by parents.
- During the parent focus group, most parents reported that their student is making progress towards IEP goals.

Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment

- Ninety percent or more of the IEPs were compliant and completed with all team members' participation and signatures.
- Almost all of them had adequate PLAAFPs, statements about how progress toward goals and periodic reports will be provided to parents, measurable goals, annual placement reviews, ESY determination, and all boxes were properly checked.
- The IEP teams focused on the students receiving appropriate services and access to the general curriculum, and designed their placements and schedules so they would achieve and make progress toward their annual goals.
- Teachers are required to keep ongoing data on the progress of IEP goals and adjust their planning, teaching and curriculum based upon that assessment process.
- Provo School District has a functioning LRBI Committee and tracks LRBI Emergency Contact records for level 3 and 4 intrusive interventions.
- Ninety percent or more of the special education documents such as the referral, consent for evaluation, eligibility determination, the IEP, and permission for placement were both current and compliant.
- Non-traditional high schools focus on improving graduation rates for all students.
- Teachers and school administrators discussed using U-PASS data in curriculum and instructional decisions
- All IEPs were current and included in special education files.
- Functional behavior assessments (FBAs), behavior intervention plans (BIPs), and behavior goals
 are included, when appropriate to address student behavioral needs.

- Special factors are considered and addressed on IEPs.
- Provo School District provided a full continuum of placement options, designed to meet the needs
 of the students with disabilities. Placement decisions are determined by the IEP team and begin
 as soon as possible following development of the IEP.
- Interviewed staff described supportive teams, working together to determine and provide appropriate services for their students with disabilities.
- Students with disabilities are included in extra-curricular and nonacademic activities.
- Extended school year is discussed and student participation is determined by the IEP team.
- Parents of preschool students are informed of ESY decision prior to the end of the school year.
 This decision is documented and included in the file.
- School personnel discussed methods of data collection and using the data to determine participation in ESY decisions.
- IEP teams are including goals which address state core curriculum standards.
- School staff utilize the Excusal form when required team members can not attend IEP meetings.
 This was documented in special education files and during staff interviews.
- IEPs contained specific special education and related services; most of which included location and frequency/duration.
- Students of transition age are invited to attend IEP meetings, as documented by student signatures and reports during student focus groups.
- Physical education is available to all students, including those with disabilities.
- Present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP) statements include baseline or current data.
- Provo School District's graduation, drop out, and U-PASS participation rates exceed state targets on the Annual Performance Report (APR).
- Paraprofessionals are properly trained and supervised by special education personnel.
- Disciplinary actions for students with disabilities are tracked at each school by principals and special education staff.
- A Behavior Support Team is available to provide assistance and training to school staff, including paraprofessionals, general education teachers, and school administrators. A handbook, titled "Managing Aggressive Students Successfully (MASS)", is used during staff training to provide information regarding effective behavior interventions and behavior management principles.

Transitions

- Age 3-5 programs are being provided through the district pre-school program.
- The preschool actively coordinates with Migrant Head Start, Head Start and Early Intervention (Birth to 3) programs to provide services and smooth transitions between programs.
- High school special education teachers provide job-sampling, work crew and sheltered workshop
 activities for the students.
- The district has a transition specialist who works with the schools and teachers on transition goals and related activities.
- IEPs were implemented by the student's 3rd birthday within required timelines.
- LEA representative participation in transition planning meetings was documented on the transition plan.
- Parents were informed of Part B Procedural Safeguards during transition meetings.
- Developmental Delay evaluation and eligibility procedures were followed with 100% accuracy.
- Preschool Outcomes forms were included in special education files.
- Use of scientifically, research-based preschool curriculum focuses on improving student outcomes.
- IEP teams considered the IFSP.
- Most students, age 15 and older, had transition plans included in the special education files.
- Transition plans documented the need for interagency linkage, when appropriate. This was
 usually documented when the student was already receiving services from the involved agency.
- Representatives of currently involved agencies were invited to IEP meetings.

Disproportionality

 No disproportionality was determined in Provo School District regarding over-identification or disciplinary actions.

Areas of Systemic Noncompliance*

- Initial and reevaluation timelines were exceeded.
- Evaluation and Eligibility: Evaluations were not sufficiently comprehensive to assess all needs; the Evaluation Summary Report was missing or did not include data; evaluation procedures not followed for students with autism, emotional disturbance, and specific learning disability.
- Notice of Meeting for eligibility, IEP development, and placement review missing or incomplete.
- Copies to parents of Evaluation Summary Reports not documented.
- IEP Content: Goals were not measurable and PLAAFP statements did not address how the student's disability affects their progress in the general education curriculum.
- IEPs and placement not reviewed at least annually.
- School to Post-School Transition: Evidence of post-secondary training or education goals not
 included in transition plans; evidence of post-secondary employment goals not included in
 transition plans; IEPs did not contain transition services such as community experiences,
 employment, and post-school adult living; course of study not complete; age-appropriate
 transition assessments not documented.

*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.