

Utah Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS)
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT
SAN JUAN SCHOOL DISTRICT
April 12, 2007

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 completion of the Self-Assessment and the development of a Program Improvement Plan. The second phase, On-Site Validation, conducted in San Juan School District on March 20-21, 2007, included student record reviews, interviews with school administrators, teachers, students, and parents, and classroom observations. Parent surveys were also mailed to a small sample of parents. Information from these data sources was shared in an exit meeting attended by staff from San Juan School District.

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

- The San Juan School District Special Education Growth and Renewal (SEGAR) Team was strengthened and became more aware of new and ongoing in-service needs.
- The Special Education District Administration became more aware of improvements needed to the ongoing internal compliance monitoring system.
- The Special Education Growth and Renewal Calendar and Trainings are well-received and appreciated by special education teachers.
- Special education assessment materials are available.
- District supervision and leadership has resulted in improvement activities relating to compliance and program implementation/development.
- Special education teachers and related service providers have low caseloads compared to state caseload numbers.
- There is a focus on literacy and numeracy district-wide.
- Curriculum supplies are updated annually, meeting the needs of teachers and students with disabilities.
- San Juan School District Special Education Director Anthony Done received the Utah Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) 2007 Stevan J. Kukic Special Education Administrator of the Year Award for his dedication to the quality of life for students with disabilities.
- School sites displayed a caring atmosphere towards all students. Multiple languages were evident in all school sites visited. At Monument Valley High School, students and staff described their love for the school.
- Each staff member interviewed, regardless of position, discussed their goal of ensuring student success.
- Files are organized in a consistent manner across the district.
- CRT scores, for students with and without disabilities, show a strong upwards trend in both math and language arts.
- All forms used currently meet compliance requirements as determined by the USOE.
- All students with disabilities are included in the general education curriculum and classroom, as determined appropriate by the IEP team. All students receive services in their neighborhood school.
- San Juan School District has related service providers (SLPs, school psychologists, OTs, and PTs) available district wide to meet the needs of the students. Related service providers willing to travel lengthy distances to reach their students.
- Special education files contained current and complete Eligibility Determinations which listed assessment results.
- A variety of assessment tools are used and documented during evaluations and reevaluations.

- SJSD provides monetary support to teachers working towards licensure in special education.
- A continuum of service options is available to meet the needs of all students with disabilities.
- All special education staff members are included in professional development through the San Juan School District Special Education Growth and Renewal (SEGAR) training process. The Special Education Director has developed an incentive program to encourage ongoing professional development for special education teachers and paraprofessionals.
- Special education teachers demonstrated their knowledge and skills in compliance, behavior management, and instruction through file reviews, classroom observations, and interviews. Some teachers credited their level of understanding to the ongoing SEGAR trainings.
- The Special Education Director reviews each referral, including supporting data, and contacts the school principal to determine if referral should proceed to an evaluation for special education.
- Parents are notified of Child Find opportunities at the beginning of each school year through newspaper ads, radio announcements, posters, and community discussions.
- Paraprofessionals are properly trained and supervised by school administration and teachers, and included in most district special education training opportunities.
- Professional development activities are data driven and based upon school and staff needs as determined by observations, staff, and parent concerns.
- Some school sites have begun implementation of a three-tier reading instruction for all students.
- Confidentiality procedures are in place district-wide, through staff training, posted Access Authorizations, and Records of Access contained in special education files.
- School principals described their staff as caring and hardworking.
- Special education staff expressed appreciation for the ongoing support and training opportunities they receive from their Special Education Director. Staff described conference rotations and drawings, end of school year socials, and departmental awards as activities that provide additional support.
- Many schools have developed an incentive program to encourage students to attend school regularly.

Parent Involvement

- Parents are generally pleased with special education services their student receives in San Juan School District.
- They are well informed of IEP meetings and many take an active part in the IEP process.
- Parents are involved in the UPIPS Steering Committee.
- Parents attend and participate in IEP meetings as documented by their signatures, letters, and statements during parent focus group.
- Special education staff are culturally sensitive to the beliefs of the families they serve.
- Monument Valley High School offers cultural learning opportunities from classes taught by grandmothers and mothers from the surrounding community.
- Parents were provided with Written Prior Notice of Actions proposed by the school for Evaluation, IEP development and implementation, and Placement.
- Interpreters are provided at IEP meetings, when appropriate. Their attendance is documented on IEPs and Eligibility Determination forms.
- Parents received copies of evaluation consent forms, evaluation summaries, Eligibility Determinations, and IEPs, as documented by signatures and reports during parent focus group.
- Parents received copies of Notice of Meeting to discuss Eligibility, IEP development, Placement, and School to Post-School Transition Planning. Notices are provided in varied and unique methods designed to reach parents.
- Special education teachers make home visits if needed, in an effort to improve home-school communication.
- Parents are invited to many district sponsored trainings. The Special Education Director provides support with transportation and interpreters, and schedules trainings/meetings throughout the district in an effort to reach all parents.
- Parents received copies of their Procedural Safeguards, as documented by signatures and stated in the parent focus group. Parents also stated that they understand their Procedural Safeguards.
- School staff have been flexible in scheduling meetings to accommodate the needs of parents.
- San Juan School District Special Education Department has created many parent friendly notices and procedures.
- During interviews, school staff described methods used to increase parent involvement school-wide.

Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment

- Student with disabilities participate in U-PASS testing or the UAA, as determined by the IEP team.
- Initial placement decision is made by the IEP team based upon student needs.
- IEP Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) statements addressed how the students' disability affects their involvement and progress in the general curriculum and general classroom.
- All required team members attend IEP meetings.
- General education teachers are expected to attend and participate in IEP meetings, as documented by IEP signatures, staff interviews, and parent focus group statements.
- Students were aware of IEPs, described attending the meetings, and knew their rights under Age of Majority notification.
- General education teachers are provided with copies of relevant portions of IEPs.
- Special education services are provided in the least restrictive environment, as determined by the IEP team.
- Current IEPs were included in all special education files.
- IEPs listed classroom accommodations that were consistent with U-PASS accommodations. IEP accommodations were implemented in general education classrooms, as documented during observations.
- Students felt that special education services provided them with additional assistance and support in their educational program.
- Special education team members were knowledgeable about Least Restrictive Behavior Interventions (LRBI) and positive behavior supports. Many schools were actively participating, either formally or informally, in the Utah Behavior Initiative (UBI) process to improve their school climate for all students.
- Special education teachers provide additional support and consultation to general education teachers regarding instructional needs for struggling students.
- Classrooms were positive environments, with ongoing teacher involvement and student participation.
- Many classrooms have been fitted with FM systems to increase student learning.
- Technology is a focus at visited high schools. Community activities have been designed to integrate technology with local culture.
- During some classroom observations, a correlation was evident between IEP goals and services and classroom instruction currently occurring.
- Teachers track student IEP progress, CRT, DIBELS, and UBSCCT data and utilize data to drive curriculum and instructional programs.

Transitions

- Interagency Agreement between Part C and Part B is in place.
- High School students are participating in the transition process.
- Overall, San Juan School District does well with the limited resources of a rural, remote county.
- Individual Family Service Plans (IFSPs) were included in the special education files, allowing for consideration during IEP planning.
- Utah Preschool Outcomes Data (UPOD) forms were complete and included in preschool special education files.
- Preschool teachers reported using UPOD Rubric to collect data; data appears valid.
- Transition plans were included in files for students by their 16th birthday.
- Transition plans contained evidence of consideration of student preferences and interests during development of post-school outcome statements.
- Special education files included evidence of age appropriate transition assessments.
- Interagency involvement was included on the transition page; Notice of Meetings also documented their invitation to the IEP meeting.
- Job sampling programs were available at high schools.

Disproportionality

- Disproportional representation of minorities, specifically American Indians, has greatly improved and is nearly in line with national averages.
- San Juan School District has decreased the percentage of American Indian and elementary school students served in special education through staff training, classroom interventions, consideration of ELL status, and appropriate evaluations.
- IEP Pro Demographic page was included in each special education file and documented student's race/ethnicity and primary home language.

Areas of Systemic Noncompliance*

- ✓ Evaluation & Eligibility Timelines: Initial evaluations not completed within 60 days of receipt of parent consent and Reevaluations not completed within 3 year timeline.
- ✓ Evaluation & Eligibility: Review of Existing Evaluation data form missing.
- ✓ Notice of Meetings not documented for Eligibility Determination.
- ✓ IEP Content: IEP Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) statements did not include baseline/current data or specific special education services.
- ✓ Timelines: IEPs and Placement not reviewed annually.
- ✓ School to Post-School Transition: Age of Majority notification not completed by student's 17th birthday.
- ✓ IEPs were not implemented by student's 3rd birthday.

*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.