

**Utah Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS)
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT
Syracuse Arts Academy
March 16, 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 at Syracuse Arts Academy on December 17, 2008 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

- In August 2007 and November 2007, trainings on the referral process for special education services were provided to staff.
- 90% of the teachers completed the teacher survey and answered the questions to the best of their ability.
- The UPIPS process allowed Syracuse Arts Academy to focus on the special education needs of our students, parents, and staff. The information from all sources will enhance our program.
- Syracuse Arts Academy made AYP for the 2006-2007 school year and those results were used as a baseline to begin the next school year.
- The principal has a background in special education, which is a great asset to the special education program and the special education teacher.
- Syracuse Arts Academy provides extended school year (ESY) for special education students.
- All teachers and paraprofessionals at Syracuse Arts Academy are highly qualified.
- Good communication between the special education teacher and the general education teachers and related service providers.
- Syracuse Arts Academy is implementing RTI along with the Discrepancy Method to determine student specific learning disability eligibility.
- Files located in locking filing cabinets with access authorization list posted and contained record of access forms.
- Initial evaluations were conducted within 45 days in 100% of applicable reviewed files.
- Evaluations were sufficiently comprehensive to identify student needs in 100% of applicable reviewed files.
- Students reevaluated at least once every 3 years in 100% of applicable reviewed files.
- Eligibility determination documentation is current in 100% of applicable reviewed files.
- Eligibility determinations were made by the full team as documented by signatures on the eligibility determination report.
- Evaluation procedures were followed in 100% of applicable reviewed files.
- Syracuse Arts Academy utilizes and documents the use of existing data in determining initial eligibility.

- There is a school-wide focus on literacy for all students within the school.
- All school staff are aware of struggling students and have plans for interventions to help students within the general education classroom.
- Principal's 200 club provides positive behavioral supports for students school-wide.
- Principal is highly involved with all special education students.
- Syracuse Arts Academy has implemented a school-wide positive behavior intervention program which includes students with disabilities.
- Syracuse Arts Academy provides small group instruction which enhances student success.

Parent Involvement

- Overall parents are pleased with the special education program at Syracuse Arts Academy.
- Parents are encouraged to volunteer and over 16,000 volunteer hours were posted by parents.
- Overall parents are happy with the special education staff and instruction.
- Notice of meeting for eligibility determination, IEP, and placement was documented in 100% of applicable reviewed files.
- Written prior notice is provided to parents at appropriate times and for all proposed actions.
- Parents are provided with a copy of evaluation summary reports, eligibility determinations and IEPs.
- Parental input was used in determining eligibility and to gather relevant information regarding student involvement and progress in the general curriculum.
- IEPs contain a statement of how progress toward IEP goals will be measured and when periodic reports on progress will be provided to parents.
- Parental input is solicited and considered during the evaluation and IEP process.
- Parents report that IEP meetings are held at mutually agreeable times.
- Majority of general education teachers are aware of the needs of students with disabilities.
- Parents are given opportunities to provide input in addition to IEP meetings.
- Parents indicated that all services on IEP are being provided.

Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment

- Syracuse Arts Academy is a small school with small class sizes. Small group instruction is implemented in general and special education classrooms.
- The special education teacher worked with the general education teachers when scheduling to ensure that students were involved in the general education classroom as much as possible.
- Present levels of achievement and academic functional performance (PLAAFP) statements and measurable goals are written clearly on IEPs.
- Current IEPs are included in all student files.
- Complete IEP team participation is documented by signatures on the IEP.
- Present levels of achievement and academic functional performance (PLAAFP) statements included baseline data and how the disability effects the student's involvement and progress in the general curriculum.
- IEP contains measurable, well-written goals which address all areas of need identified in the PLAAFP statements.
- Short-term objectives are included for students participating in the UAA.
- IEP contains specific special education and related services.
- The IEP team considers and addresses any needed special factors.
- Initial IEPs are developed within thirty calendar days following eligibility determination.
- Special education services are scheduled to ensure that students do not miss core curriculum instruction.
- School uses data from U-PASS testing to make instructional decisions and determining IEP goals.
- Staff has a firm understanding of behavior intervention plans and when manifestation determination is needed.
- All students are given the opportunity to participate in school plays, choir, and integrated arts.

Transitions

Syracuse Arts Academy does not have any transition age students at this time.

Disproportionality

- Syracuse Arts Academy receives students based on choice through a required lottery system. No restrictions on race, academic achievement, or disabilities are used to enter the lottery.
- Primary home language and ethnicity are documented in all student files.

Areas of Systemic Noncompliance*

- IEP was not reviewed periodically, not less than annually, in 100% 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.*