

Utah Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS)
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT
THOMAS EDISON CHARTER SCHOOL (North)
January 26, 2006

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 LEA 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 Thomas Edison Charter School (North) on October 4-5, 2005, included student record reviews, interviews with school administrators, related service professionals, teachers, parents, and students. Information from these data sources was shared in an exit meeting attended by staff from Thomas Edison Charter School and members of the Steering Committee.

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

- Teachers are provided with yearly training opportunities designed to improve skills.
- Thomas Edison Charter School (North) provides free summer school to all students.
- Thomas Edison Charter School (North) provides free before and after school tutoring by the student's own teacher.
- School maintains confidentiality of special education records through locked cabinets and up to date record of access lists, as well as through annual training of general education teachers.
- School special education staff was eager to learn new concepts and implemented that new knowledge into the student special education files.
- Special education files were very well organized using a binder system.
- Creation and use of Referral Documentation Data form will encourage general education teachers to document prereferral intervention data.

Parent Involvement

- In general, parents were pleased with the special education program at Thomas Edison Charter School (North).
- Parents feel that the school personnel are willing to listen to them and make changes as needed.
- Parents report receiving copies of IEPs. This was also verified by the file review data.

- The parent focus group was a sincere sharing of positive experiences and concerns. Parents were well-informed and pleasant in discussing their views of the special education program. A large number of parents attended the meeting.
- Parents participate in IEP meetings as shown by their signatures and verbal reports at the parent focus group.

Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment

- Special education assessments are conducted by a highly qualified staff.
- Students with disabilities are served in the least restrictive environment to meet their needs.
- IEP development at Thomas Edison Charter School (North) includes beginning with a true draft, then soliciting input from a team at a meeting, creating a final document.
- Very few instances of problem behavior occur resulting in a need for disciplinary procedures and consequences.

Transitions

- Thomas Edison Charter School (North) does not have students of transition age at this time.

Disproportionality

- School ethnicity and disability rates are comparable to state rates and charter school enrollment.
- Thomas Edison Charter School (North) reported no suspension/expulsions for longer than 10 days during the 2004-2005 school year.

Areas of Systemic Noncompliance*

- ✓ LEA Special Education Policy and Procedures Manual not submitted.
- ✓ Procedural Safeguards - Copies to parents of Review of Existing Evaluation Data form not documented. Copies to parents of Evaluation Summary Reports not documented. Notice of Meeting for IEP meetings missing or incomplete. Notice of Meeting for annual review of placement meetings missing or incomplete. Prior Written Notice of implementation of maintaining placement or change of placement not documented.
- ✓ Timelines - Timelines for reevaluation exceeded. Timelines for annual review of placement exceeded.
- ✓ Evaluation/Reevaluation - Review of Existing Evaluation not documented. Eligibility Determination not documented. Evaluation Summary Report not documented. Evaluation Summary Report did not document a variety of assessment tools and strategies that were used in determining eligibility. Evaluation Procedures not documented.
- ✓ IEP – Present level of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP) statements did not include how the disability affects involvement/progress in the general curriculum. IEP special factors such as positive behavior supports (PBS), language needs for limited English proficiency (LEP) students, Braille instruction, communication needs, and assistive technology 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.