

Utah Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS)
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT
Wasatch County School District
May 28, 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 Wasatch County School District on December 9-10, 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

- All initial evaluation timelines were met.
- Data submitted were timely and accurate.
- Needs for professional development are determined through monitoring of student files, and other compliance areas, requests by building administrators and requests by teachers.
- Wasatch School District provides multiple training opportunities for staff development.
- Students interviewed during a student focus group reported that special education has helped them to get homework done, get good grades, pass tests, and work with general education teachers.
- Wasatch School District provides a para-educator handbook to paraprofessionals working with students with disabilities. This handbook includes information of confidentiality of student information, instructional and behavioral strategies for working with students with disabilities, and detailed job descriptions.
- Files are maintained in locking filing cabinets with Access Authorization lists posted, and files contained record of access forms.
- A consistent file organization is utilized throughout the district.
- Wasatch School District is utilizing Response to Intervention (RtI) for instruction district-wide.
- District staff members were extremely prepared and helpful during on-site visit.
- Teachers and principals have positive attitudes toward special education students.
- District staff report a high level of support from the special education coordinator, including the provision of professional development opportunities.
- Professional Learning Collaboration (PLC) teams are used to ensure student success in the general curriculum.
- Initial evaluations were conducted within 45 days of receiving consent in 100% of applicable reviewed files.
- Professional development has been provided to school staff on Utah State Board of Education Special Education Rules.

- Evaluations are sufficiently comprehensive to identify all of the student's special education and related service needs.
- Current eligibility determination and evaluation summary reports are included in all review student files.
- A variety of assessment tools and strategies were used to gather relevant functional and academic information that was used in determining eligibility.
- A group of qualified professionals and parents determined eligibility of students after completion of the evaluation process.

Parent Involvement

- According to parent interviews and the parent focus group conducted in the 07-08 school year, 100% of the parents received the procedural safeguards and the teacher explained them sufficiently for them to understand to the best of their ability. Parents also stated that they were comfortable asking teachers for clarification as it was needed.
- Parent also reported being involved in the District Parent Advisory Council where they give input and help with parent training sessions.
- Parents, during the parent focus group, reported that IEP meetings are held at mutually agreeable times, some being held before and after school.
- During the parent focus group, parents reported a high level of support, involvement and communication from the special education teachers, including providing supports for students with disabilities in extra-curricular and non-academic activities.
- During the parent focus group, parents reported feeling listened to and valued as a part of the special education team.
- Forms provided to parents in Spanish as needed.
- Files contain signed consent and written prior notice for evaluation/reevaluation.
- Parents participated in and were given copies of the IEP as documented by signatures on IEPs.
- Parents report receiving information about guardianship from the special education teachers.
- IEPs contain a statement of when progress reports will be provided to parents, and files contained copies of progress reports.
- Prior written notice and consent for initial placement is included in all reviewed special education files.
- Notice of meeting for eligibility determination, IEP, and review of placement are included in student special education files.
- Files contain written prior notice of initial and continuing eligibility, as well as IEP implementation.
- Parents are provided with a copy of eligibility determination forms and evaluation summary reports.
- Parental input was used in determining eligibility as documented by signatures on forms.
- During the parent focus group, parents report that special education and related services are provided as listed in the IEP.
- If a student's placement was changed, written notice was provided to parents.

Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment

- Graduation rates for students with disabilities in Wasatch School District was 86.67%, above the state target of 73.70%
- Wasatch School District made Adequate Yearly Progress.
- 70.62% of students spend the majority of the school day with their regular education peers. This is much higher than the State target.
- Current IEPs are included in all reviewed student files.
- Short term objectives are included in the IEP for students participating in the UAA.
- Full IEP team participation is documented by signatures on IEP forms.
- Initial IEPs are developed within 30 calendar days following eligibility determination.
- IEPs contain measurable annual goals which are targeted to general education achievement and student success.

- Secondary staff expressed pride and confidence in their systematic identification of, and interventions for students with behavior concerns.
- An IEP “Brief Summary” form is used to provide information about IEP goals and accommodations to general educators.
- Elementary school teachers are utilizing progress monitoring data to assist in determining Extended School Year (ESY) eligibility and progress toward IEP goals.
- IEPs contain a statement of how the student’s progress toward meeting the annual goals will be measured.
- IEPs contain a statement of supplementary aids and services to be provided to, or on behalf of students.

Transitions

- Transition age students report being invited to and attending their IEP meetings.
- 100% of students referred by Part C have IEPs implemented prior to their 3rd birthday.
- 100% of post-school transition age students have transition goals/planning on their IEPs.
- 100% of students who have graduated have been employed, enrolled in some type of post secondary school, or both, within one year of leaving high school.
- Wasatch School District’s transition specialist is very knowledgeable regarding community resources for transition age students and collaborates with outside community agencies on a regular basis.
- During the student focus groups secondary age students reported that they are provided with many opportunities for career training and experience.
- Utah Preschool Outcome Data (UPOD) form is utilized and complete in 100% of applicable reviewed files.
- Transition plans include evidence of post-secondary training or education goals, employment goals and independent living goals, when appropriate.
- Measurable post-secondary goals are based on age-appropriate transition assessments.
- IEPs contain annual IEP goals that will reasonably enable the student to meet the post-secondary goals.
- IEPs contain transition services in all required areas focused on improving the academic achievement of the student to facilitate movement from school to post-school.
- Beginning not later than one year before the student’s 18th birthday, the student was informed that rights under Part B will transfer to him/her when he/she reaches 18.

Disproportionality

- Wasatch School District uses appropriate identification systems in regards to all students, regardless of race and ethnicity.
- Forms and assessments are provided in Spanish when needed.

Areas of Systemic Noncompliance*

- Review of existing evaluation data was not conducted in 3% of applicable reviewed files.
- Review of existing evaluation data did not include parents in 8% of applicable reviewed files.
- Review of existing evaluation data did not include LEA representative in 4% of applicable reviewed files.
- Reevaluation timelines were not met in 8% of applicable reviewed files.
- Evaluation Procedures not followed in 16% of applicable reviewed files.
 - Intellectual Disability: Documentation of a major test of intelligence administered by a qualified examiner indicating significantly sub average intellectual functioning missing in 33% of applicable reviewed files.
 - Intellectual Disability: Documentation of significant deficits in adaptive behavior as measured by standard and/or curriculum based assessment gather from parents and school staff missing in 33% of applicable reviewed files.

- Specific Learning Disability: Documentation of data that demonstrate that prior to, or as part of the referral process, the student was provided with appropriate instruction in regular education settings missing in 8% of applicable files.
 - Specific Learning Disability: Documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals provided to the student's parents missing in 16% of applicable reviewed files.
 - Speech Language Impairment: For students whose primary home language is other than English, documentation that the team determined that the speech language impairment exists in the student's primary language missing in 40% of applicable reviewed files.
- IEP not reviewed periodically, not less than annually in 33% of applicable reviewed files.
 - Placement not reviewed annually in 26% of applicable reviewed files.
 - Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) statements missing baseline or current data in 3% of applicable reviewed files.
 - PLAAFP statements do not include how the disability affects progress in the general curriculum in 3% of applicable reviewed files.
 - IEP goals do not address areas of need as identified by the PLAAFP statement in 9% of applicable reviewed files.
 - IEPs do not contain a statement of specific special education services in 3% of applicable reviewed files.
 - Transition plans do not contain a course of study in 28% 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.*