MEMORANDUM

To: Glenna Gallo, Director of Special Education Services

From: Utah Special Education Advisory Panel

Subject: Bullying

Date: April 23, 2013

In our role as an advisory panel, we would like to provide input and recommendation to the Special Education Section of the Utah State Office of Education to improve services for students with disabilities.

The following memo comes as a result of HB 134 S3 FY2013, USEAP recommends that the USOE seeks legislative clarification (e.g., LEAs cannot use the notification or information about the notification for the schools' other purposes). Specifically, USEAP's concerns are related to confidentiality of all students involved, while not creating a "knew or should have known" liability for LEAs being mandated to collect information about these incidents, but not being allowed to use that data for other purposes (e.g., such as predicting patterns of bullying or harassment behaviors from an individual or group of students). Without the ability to analyze the data for patterns it becomes difficult to reduce the incidences of unwanted behaviors through targeted interventions.

We would like LEA's to provide additional support to students with disabilities, staff and their teachers as it relates to bullying in the following ways:

- Incorporating Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) for students in the
 approach for addressing bullying behaviors in our schools is imperative. MTSS
 would include primary interventions at the school-wide level, which may include
 increasing the awareness of bullying and promoting disability awareness
 throughout the entire school community by the use of bullying prevention
 programs.
- Implementing social skills instruction and self-advocacy at the secondary and tertiary levels is recommended. We would like to see included in this approach ways to develop friendship skills and prevent isolation of students with disabilities (e.g., Circle of Friends, Lunch Bunch).

- Fostering collaboration between special and general educators to address the needs of all students who have become victim to bullying. We recognize that many programs address the needs of the bully and victim, but would also like to see programs that encourage advocacy for the victims, from the bystanders.
- Providing resources that address bullying to all LEAs.
- Providing adequate staff development opportunities.
- Incorporating goals or strategies on the IEP that improve a student's self-advocacy, social skills, and communication.

Thank you for your time and consideration in reviewing these recommendations. We as a panel appreciate all of your efforts on behalf of children with disabilities throughout the State of Utah.