

USEAP approved this memo unanimously on 1/25/21
S&A Committee agenda item requested by USEAP and created by Leah Voorhies
Memo accepted for consideration by full Board on March 12 2021
Contact: Leah Voorhies (leah.voorhies@schools.utah.gov) for information

MEMORANDUM

To: Leah Voorhies, Assistant Superintendent of Student Support
From: Utah Special Education Advisory Panel (USEAP)
Subject: Systems Change for Meaningful Inclusion of Students with Disabilities
Date: January 26, 2021

In our role as an advisory panel, we would like to provide input and recommendations to the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) to improve services for students with disabilities through addressing the need for **systemic changes that support meaningful inclusion of ALL students with disabilities**. The following are outlined barriers and recommended solutions from the panel:

Barrier #1: Teacher knowledge of successful inclusive practices: General education teachers often lack detailed knowledge, training, and support required for successful co-teaching experiences, curriculum adaptation, and student accommodations.

Solutions: Itinerant teaching models support inclusion.

Itinerant special education professionals could include the following roles: directing support for general education, preparing materials, and providing direct services within general education routines. LEAs should explore using inclusion instructional coaches to support general education teachers similar to the model used for subject-specific coaches. The USBE should create and offer a micro-credential in inclusive practices available to administrators, general education, and special education teachers.

Barrier #2: Preparation Time for Inclusion: successful inclusion requires additional preparation and collaboration between special education teachers, general education teachers, and administrators.

Solutions: Caseloads should be carefully considered to include the time and responsibilities for implementing inclusive models, collaboration, implementation of accommodations, and preparation of materials. Integrated technologies in LEAs should support collaboration and communication between general education and special education. Because an individualized education program (IEP) is not a singular event, but a continuing process, time should be allocated for regular teaming between general education and special education personnel to plan, implement, and monitor the effectiveness of services.

USEAP approved this memo unanimously on 1/25/21
S&A Committee agenda item requested by USEAP and created by Leah Voorhies
Memo accepted for consideration by full Board on March 12 2021
Contact: Leah Voorhies (leah.voorhies@schools.utah.gov) for information

Barrier #3: School Culture: Administrative policies and supports designed to support inclusive practices to maximize collaboration and talent.

Solutions: USBE and LEAs should provide specific administrator training so that systems between general education and special education can be integrated instead of competing. Administrators must have the knowledge necessary to review, support, and integrate inclusive practices into their school-wide systems. LEAs and administrators should create detailed plans to increase quality inclusive experiences including training, collaboration, support, and accountability. Inclusion cannot succeed in a silo.

Barrier #4: Lack of Accountability and Data: Data surrounding special education fails to measure accommodation implementation and effectiveness across all classrooms.

Solutions: USBE, LEAs, and administrators should create a system to identify effective accommodations and track implementation with both fidelity and accountability measures. These include ensuring accommodations are met in all school environments and increasing opportunities for collaboration on targeted students.

Thank you for your time and consideration in reviewing these recommendations. We, as a panel, appreciate your efforts on behalf of children with disabilities throughout the State of Utah. We appreciate the initiatives and directives that USBE has implemented in the past based on our recommendation and value the benefit that Utah students with disabilities have and will receive from those actions. Inclusion of individuals with disabilities will continue to be a priority of our panel and recommendations.