# Utah Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT AMERICAN PREPARATORY ACADEMY February 1, 2007

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 completion of the Self-Assessment and the development of a Program Improvement Plan. The second phase, On-Site Validation, conducted in American Preparatory Academy on January 8-9, 2007, included student record reviews, interviews with school administrators, teachers, and parents, and classroom observations. Parent surveys were also mailed to a small sample of parents. Information from these data sources was shared in an exit meeting attended by staff from American Preparatory Academy.

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**

- General education teachers responded positively to the school Inclusion Manual.
- The general education teachers also found the information regarding special education on the "Tip of the Week" very useful.
- American Preparatory Academy has thorough child find practices in place which include hearing and speech/language screenings.
- Procedures in place to ensure the confidentiality of student special education records is maintained through access authorizations, record of access forms, and locking cabinets.
- During student focus groups, students reported feeling less stressed and receiving individualized attention and accommodations due to their special education services.
- During interviews, students, parents, and teachers reported a positive school climate, which was also observed by the UPIPS team during the visit.
- American Preparatory Academy (APA) sends out an annual child find notification to all parents with students enrolled at APA.
- Students with disabilities are included in all academic and extra-curricular activities.
- Special education files contained completed referral forms; referrals from parents were included in reviewed files.
- Weekly team meetings held at 3 levels (K-3, 4-6, 7-9) allows all teachers to brainstorm on student needs. These meetings also provide opportunities for ongoing collaboration between special education staff and general education teachers.
- Special education files were organized.

## **Parent Involvement**

- Parents are generally happy with the special education program at APA.
- Parents like the Special Education Department's quarterly newsletters and open communication.
- Parents reported being a part of the IEP team and that their opinions are valued.
- All students in the school receive a daily Learning Plan that lists daily assignments and homework.
- Students are provided with a file that organizes class work and homework.
- Parent signatures were generally found on IEPs and various consent forms.
- Special education files contained documentation that parents received copies of IEPs, Eligibility Determination, and Placement.
- Notice of Meeting was included in files for IEPs and Eligibility Determinations.
- Parents reported good communication and easy access to all school personnel.

• During the parent focus group, parents praised special education staff.

#### Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment

- Students with disabilities have access to the general education curriculum, as reported by teachers, parents, students, and documented in special education files. When students with disabilities do not regularly participate in activities, the special education teacher follows-up with parent contacts to increase participation.
- Students reported receiving accommodations during U-PASS testing.
- Accommodations are included throughout each student's IEP.
- Initial evaluations were completed within 60-day timeline.
- School administrator and Special Education Teacher are knowledgeable of special education procedures, specifically LRBI and IDEA 2004 disciplinary procedures.
- APA attempts to have all required team members attend special education meetings. Meetings are rescheduled when some team members can not attend.
- Supports to ensure the success of all students are in place and include volunteer assistance in classrooms, strong paraeducator support in general education classrooms, 3-tier model of instruction for all academic programs, and direct instruction.

#### **Transitions**

Students were invited to attend IEP meetings where transition planning will be discussed.

#### **Disproportionality**

• Special education files contained documentation of home language.

#### Areas of Systemic Noncompliance\*

- ✓ Pre-referral interventions did not include data that documented the interventions were unsuccessful.
- ✓ Eligibility criteria not met due to missing report or procedures not followed.
- ✓ Consent for placement not documented.
- ▼ Notice of Meeting for Placement not documented.
- ✓ IEP Present levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) statements did not include baseline data or how the disability affects progress in the general curriculum, IEP goals were not measurable, IEP did not contain specific special education services.
- ✓ Transition plans not documented, age appropriate transition assessments not documented, and transition planning procedures not documented.

<sup>\*</sup>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.