

Utah Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS)
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT
EMERY SCHOOL DISTRICT
APRIL 28, 2010

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 at Emery School District on February 23-24, 2010 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

- The training of the data collection team facilitated a positive interaction with teachers and team members to review files in a non-threatening manner.
- Emery School District's compliance monitor has set up a schedule for regular file monitoring to help keep the district files in order.
- Emery School District's Staff Development Team was strengthened and became more aware of in-service needs.
- Teachers are given opportunities to attend the Rural Schools Conference, Core Academy, Special Education Law Conference, and other professional development classes as they arise.
- Several teachers are working on enhancing their skills and effectiveness in classroom through professional development activities.
- Emery School District meets requirements for participation for students with disabilities on the Language Arts and Math Criterion Referenced Tests (CRTs).
- School and district staff were welcoming and well prepared for interviews, file reviews, and other UPIPS team on-site activities.
- Emery School District utilizes peer tutors to support students with disabilities in general education settings.
- Emery School District staff work as a team with all school staff in supporting students with disabilities, as reported by school staff during interviews.
- Emery School District supports and encourages staff in obtaining appropriate licensure, as reported during interviews with school staff.
- Students in special education are included in all school activities, as reported by school staff and students during interviews and focus groups.
- School staff and parents report benefit from having access to a school psychologist within the district.
- Teams review existing student data for initial evaluations.
- A consistent file organization system is utilized district-wide, which facilitated ease during file reviews.
- A positive school climate and attitude toward students with disabilities was observed at all school sites.
- Paraprofessionals are well utilized in providing services and supports for students with disabilities in both general and special education environments.

- Emery School District provided an opportunity for students to participate on the Utah Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS) Steering Committee.
- Emery School District has a focus on providing research-based curriculum and instructional strategies for students, as reported by school and district staff during interviews.
- School staff report a high level of support from the district special education director and compliance monitor.
- Emery School District has an English Language Learner (ELL) teacher available for support for students with disabilities and teachers.
- Emery School District utilizes technology to provide distance professional development opportunities.
- Student special education files include current eligibility determination documentation.
- Cleveland Elementary was recognized as a Blue Ribbon National School of Excellence in the fall of 2009.

Parent Involvement

- Parents are generally pleased with the special education services their children receive.
- Parents are informed about IEP meetings and take an active role in meetings.
- Parents were provided with an opportunity to be involved in the UPIPS Steering Committee.
- Parents, during the parent focus group, reported good communication with teachers via email and daily home notes.
- Parental input was used in determining eligibility, as documented by signatures on forms.
- Parents, during the parent focus group, reported that their input was valued and considered.
- Parents were provided with written notice of IEP implementation and copies of the IEP, as documented in student special education files.
- Parents, during the parent focus group, reported that special education teachers are available to answer questions regarding their student's needs.
- Parents, during the parent focus group, reported that the teachers were willing and available to answer questions regarding procedural safeguards.
- Parent signatures are present on all required documentation.
- Parents, during the parent focus group, reported that general education teachers and special education teacher collaborate to provide special education services for students with disabilities.
- Parents, during the parent focus group, reported that special education teachers are utilizing a variety of instructional strategies.
- Some parents report receiving daily home notes regarding student progress.
- Procedural safeguards are provided to parents, as documented in student special education files and reported by parents.
- Parents are provided with a copy of the Evaluation Summary Report.

Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment

- The majority of students with disabilities attend their neighborhood schools and participate in the same school activities as their non-disabled peers.
- IEPs focus on goals directly correlated with State Core Curriculum.
- Emery School District met State Targets for APR Indicators 1 and 2; graduation and dropout rates for students with disabilities.
- Emery School District met the State Target for APR Indicator 4; suspension and expulsion rates for students with disabilities.
- Emery School District met the State Target for APR indicator 5; student's educated in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).
- Current IEPs are included in student special education files.
- Elementary school staff utilizes student data in writing IEP goals and determining programming needs.
- Full team participation is documented by signatures on IEP forms.
- Emery School District has a low incidence of safe school's violations and disciplinary actions.
- U-PASS accommodations are included in student special education files.
- Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) statements included how the student's disability affects involvement/progress in the general curriculum.

- Ferron, Huntington, and Cottonwood Elementary school teams meet on a quarterly basis to determine student needs and ensure accommodations are provided in the classroom.
- IEPs contain a statement of specific special education services, and supplementary aides and services.
- IEPs document participation of full IEP teams through signatures on IEP forms.
- Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) statements include a statement of how the student's disability affects progress/involvement in the general curriculum.
- IEPs include a description of benchmarks or short-term objectives for students who are participating in Utah's Alternate Assessment (UAA).
- IEPs include a statement of when periodic reports on progress will be provided to parents.
- Initial placement began as soon as possible following the development of the IEP.
- Placement decisions are made by the IEP team, including the students parents, as documented by signatures on forms.

Transitions

- Age 3-5 programs are provided through the district preschool program.
- Emery School District's preschool director actively coordinates with Early Intervention and Head Start Programs.
- Literacy training in make-it take-it format has been provided to preschool and kindergarten parents at all sites.
- Preschool staff have attended the State Preschool Conference, Deaf Blind Conference and had Creative Classroom Training.
- Emery School District provides job-shadowing activities for high school students.
- Secondary special education teachers attended transition training presented by Susan Loving, USOE Transition Specialist.
- Emery School District met State targets for Indicator 12, students transitioning from Part C to Part B with an IEP in place by the student's third birthday.
- Utah Preschool Outcomes Data (UPOD) forms were present and complete in student special education files.
- Participation of school personnel at transition meetings is documented.
- Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) is considered and included in student special education files.
- IEPs are in place by the eligible student's 3rd birthday.
- Students, during a student focus group, reported attending an IEP meeting.
- Some IEPs documented student participation in IEP meetings by signatures on IEP forms.
- School staff report an interest and willingness to learn more about transition planning and how to provide transition services.

Disproportionality

- A review of data by the LEA and USOE showed no areas of disproportionality

Areas of Systemic Noncompliance*

- Initial evaluation timelines were not met in 3% of applicable reviewed files.
- Reevaluation timelines were not met in 40% of applicable reviewed files.
- Review of existing evaluation data form missing in 14% of applicable reviewed files.
- Review of existing evaluation data did not document parents or attempts to involve parents in 7% of applicable reviewed files.
- Evaluations were not sufficiently comprehensive to identify all of the student's special education and related service needs in 19% of applicable reviewed files.
- Documentation that a variety of assessment tools and strategies were used in determining eligibility missing in 8% of applicable reviewed files.
- Evaluation and eligibility procedures not followed in 33% of applicable reviewed files.

- Emotional Disturbance:
 - Documentation that multiple measures, both formal and informal, were used to assess behavioral, social, and academic areas missing in 100% of applicable reviewed files.
 - Documentation which demonstrates that the behavior adversely affects the student's educational performance has been exhibited over a long period of time and to a marked degree missing in 100% of applicable reviewed files.
 - Documentation of at least three fifteen-minute observations on referring behavior pinpoints missing in 100% of applicable reviewed files.
 - Complete documentation in the student's records of the student's academic performance missing in 100% of applicable reviewed files.
 - Complete documentation in the student's records of the student's social/behavioral/adaptive assessments which provide information regarding the student's past and present patterns of interactions with peers, family, teachers, adults, and others missing in 100% of applicable reviewed files.
 - Complete documentation in the student's records for behaviors for which the student is referred missing in 100% of applicable reviewed files.
- Specific Learning Disability:
 - Discrepancy data are not included in student special education files in 8% of applicable reviewed files.
 - Documentation that prior to, or as part of, the referral process, the student was provided with appropriate instruction in regular education settings, delivered by qualified personnel missing in 31% of applicable reviewed files.
 - Data-based documentation of assessment of achievement at reasonable intervals, reflecting formal assessment of student progress during instruction missing in 39% of applicable reviewed files.
 - Documentation that results of repeated assessments of achievement were provided to the student's parents missing in 54% of applicable reviewed files.
 - Documentation that an observation of the student's academic performance and behavior areas of difficulty in the student's learning environment was conducted missing in 23% of applicable reviewed files.
 - Documentation that the relevant behavior noted during the observation was included in the evaluation/eligibility report missing in 23% of applicable reviewed files.
 - Statement that the student does not achieve adequately for the student's age, or to meet State-approved grade-level standards missing in 31% of applicable reviewed files.
 - Documentation that the team produced a report that shows a significant discrepancy between the student's intelligence and achievement assessments missing in 31% of applicable reviewed files.
- Consent for evaluation/reevaluation missing in 24% of applicable reviewed files.
- Consent for initial placement missing in 4% of applicable reviewed files.
- Written prior notice of evaluation/reevaluation missing in 14% of applicable reviewed files.
- Written prior notice of Extended School Year (ESY) goals and services missing in 4% of applicable reviewed files.
- Written prior notice of change of placement missing in 4% of applicable reviewed files.
- Notice of Meeting for Eligibility Determination Meeting missing in 43% of applicable reviewed files.
- Notice of meeting for IEP meeting missing in 36% of applicable reviewed files.
- Notice of meeting for annual review of placement missing in 27% of applicable reviewed files.

- Documentation that parental input was used in determining eligibility missing in 4% of applicable reviewed files.
- Documentation that parents received a copy of Eligibility Determination Documentation missing in 4% of applicable reviewed files.
- IEP timelines not met.
- Initial IEPs were not developed within thirty calendar days following eligibility determination in 10% of applicable reviewed files.
- IEP timelines not met in 15% of applicable reviewed files.
- Placement timelines not met in 20% of applicable reviewed files.
- Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) statements do not include baseline or current data in 9% of applicable reviewed files.
- IEPs do not contain a statement of measurable annual goals in 32% of applicable reviewed files.
- IEP goals do not address the areas of educational need identified in the PLAAFP statement in 5% of applicable reviewed files.
- IEPs do not contain a description of who the student's progress toward meeting the annual goals will be measured in 5% of applicable reviewed files.
- IEPs do not contain a statement of any individual accommodations that are necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the student on State-wide assessments in 18% of applicable reviewed files.
- Documentation that the student's transition plan was reviewed annually missing in 8% of applicable reviewed files.
- Evidence of post-secondary training or education goals missing in 17% of applicable reviewed files.
- Evidence of employment goals missing in 17% of applicable reviewed files.
- Evidence of independent living skills goals, where appropriate, missing in 17% of applicable reviewed files.
- Documentation that the student's post-secondary goals were based on age-appropriate transition assessments missing in 50% of applicable reviewed files.
- IEP does not contain goals that will reasonably enable the student to meet the post-secondary goals in 33% of applicable reviewed files.
- IEP does not contain transition services focused on improving the academic achievement of the student to facilitate movement from school to post school in 50% of applicable reviewed files.
- Documentation that the IEP team considered whether or not any transition services are likely to be provided or paid for by other agencies missing in 67% of applicable reviewed files.
- Documentation that agency representatives were invited to attend the IEP meeting when needed missing in 17% of applicable reviewed files.
- Transition plans do not contain a course of study in 67% of applicable reviewed files.
- Documentation that beginning not later than one year before the student's 18th birthday, the student was informed that rights under Par B will transfer to him/her when he/she reaches 18 missing in 33% 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.*