

**Utah Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS)**  
**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT**  
**Liberty Academy**  
**February 11, 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 at Liberty Academy on November 18, 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**

- Liberty Academy has one special educator who is both teacher and director of the special education program. This special educator demonstrates good knowledge of how a special education program is intended to run.
- Special education teacher/director shows strengths in the areas of: referral process, IEP member participation, IEP compliance, IEP implementation, and perspective of special education's role in the school.
- The self-review of the student IEP files was a positive experience for those who participated.
- A procedure has been implemented to continually correct any compliance issues found with IEPs through a monitoring system.
- Liberty Academy's speech-language pathologist demonstrates strengths in IDEA procedural safeguards and the referral process.
- Special education students participate in the same classroom activities as their non-disabled peers.
- A consistent file organization system is utilized for all special education files.
- The special education teacher is very knowledgeable regarding the special education process and procedures are consistently implemented. She collaborates well with general education teachers and paraprofessionals.
- Files are stored in a locked file cabinet with access authorization list posted, and record of access included in every file.
- Evaluations for students with specific learning disabilities (SLD) included observations in 100% of applicable reviewed files.
- School administration is very supportive of special education teacher and the Special Education Department.
- Initial evaluations completed within 45 day timeline.
- Special education teacher has implemented a researched-based reading curriculum.
- Liberty Academy is participating in a pilot program for teaching students self-advocacy utilizing the "LEAD program".
- Eligibility determination documentation is current in all applicable files.

- A variety of assessment tools and strategies were used to gather relevant data that was used in determining eligibility.

### **Parent Involvement**

- Parents report having their procedural safeguards explained so that they understood them.
- Parents report having the opportunity to provide input during their child's evaluation and that the evaluation team listened to and considered the parental input.
- Parents report an overall satisfaction with their child's special education program and the school's special education teacher.
- Parents are pleased in general with their child's progress and with the IEP process. Parents appear supportive of the school and the special education department.
- Parents feel involved in the IEP evaluation and development processes.
- Parent's report IEP meetings being scheduled at a mutually agreeable time and that the team considered and utilized parental input when writing IEP goals.
- Parents report that the special education teacher provides support to ensure student success in the general education environment.
- Parents report that the school is willing to listen to them and consider their suggestions, not just at the IEP, but throughout the school year, and make adjustments to their student's program as needed.
- Parents report a high level of communication between home and school via phone calls, emails, etc.
- Parent's participation in IEP, evaluation and eligibility meetings documented by parent signatures on all required documents.
- Notice of Meetings included in special education files.
- Parents are happy with and appreciative of the school's special education teacher.
- Parents and students report that the special education department is providing them with the support they need to progress.
- Procedural Safeguards provided and explained to parents.

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

- Student's IEPs are developed as a team with the focus on the individual student. The LEA attends every meeting.
- All students are welcomed to the charter school and accommodations have been afforded to all students.
- Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) statements included baseline data and how the disability affects the student's involvement and progress in the general curriculum.
- IEP goals were well written, measurable, and addressed all areas of need identified by the PLAAFP statement.
- Measurable objectives were included for student taking the Utah Alternative Assessment (UAA).
- Liberty Academy is teaching their students self-advocacy skills, including how to participate in the IEP meeting.
- Liberty Academy includes all students in all non-academic and extra-curricular activities, including an after-school program implemented by the school administrator, and school recognition program.
- All IEP team members were invited to and attended the IEP meeting as documented by signatures on IEPs.
- IEP contains a statement of specific special education and related services.
- Current IEPs are included in student files.
- IEPs are reviewed periodically; not less than annually.

### **Transitions**

**Liberty Academy does not have students of transition age at this time.**

### **Disproportionality**

- Students at Liberty Academy are classified following state and district policies, resulting in average numbers of classification by disability categories and ethnicity categories.

- Race/ethnicity and primary home language are documented in student files.

**Areas of Systemic Noncompliance\***

- Reevaluation exceeded the 3 year timeline in 100% of applicable reviewed files.
- Initial IEP was not developed within 30 calendar days following eligibility determination in 50% of applicable reviewed files.
- Evaluation procedures not followed in 33% of applicable reviewed files
  - No documentation of report showing a significant discrepancy for students with specific learning disabilities (SLD).
  - No documentation that as part of the evaluation data-based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals was provided to parents for students with specific learning disabilities (SLD).

*\*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.*