

**Utah Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS)**  
**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT**  
**ODYSSEY CHARTER SCHOOL**  
**January 30, 2008**

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 in Odyssey Charter School on December 6, 2007, included student record reviews, interviews with school administrators, teachers, students, and parents. 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 response from the regular education teachers on the Inclusion Manual and the information provided in the manual was very positive.
- The general education teachers also found the information within the "Tip of the Week" very useful. It included changes in IDEA, speech and language and self-esteem issues, as well as information on how to get additional information or support regarding special education.
- There was positive feedback on the special education in-service training provided.
- Other positive responses on the general education surveys centered on the degree of positive open communication at the school with regard to special education.
- The school utilizes research based curriculum and methodologies.
- Regular education teachers described providing assistance to struggling students by trying accommodations suggested in the Inclusion Manual, as well as discussing the student issues during TAT meetings and documenting everything.
- Regular education teachers indicated understanding of the U-PASS adaptations and familiarity with LRBI.
- Caseloads for professional staff were within limits as addressed by laws and regulations, and projected caseloads are well within guidelines.
- Various trainings are provided.
- Odyssey CS utilizes achievement grouping in the areas of reading, spelling, and math through grade 4. These fluid groups are composed of 8-12 students and are continually assessed to ensure the proper placement of each student.
- Teacher licenses and endorsements are current for their assignments.
- OCS utilizes DIBELS to monitor student progress in reading.
- Odyssey Charter School has implemented a three-tier model of instruction school wide.
- All students receive instruction at both their ability and grade level. Ability grouping is based upon ongoing data; students move from group to group based upon frequent data results.
- Instructional decisions are based upon multiple data sources, including U-PASS data, DWA data, DIBELS, and CBA.
- Students with disabilities are provided services with their nondisabled peers to the extent appropriate. Due to the ability groupings, students with disabilities receive specialized instruction within those groupings, rather than being removed from the classroom.
- The Dean of Student Services is also functioning as the Special Education Director, which allows for seamless integration of special education services, accommodations, and teacher supports.

- The Inclusion Manual, which provides practical information regarding disabilities categories and accommodations, has been provided to all teachers and instructors school-wide.
- Child find activities are implemented consistently. Staff are trained annually and parent notification occurs in the weekly newsletter and is posted on the school website. Ongoing data is analyzed frequently and leads to early identification of students with disabilities.
- Physical education is provided to students with disabilities in the same manner as it is provided to students without disabilities in the school.
- Initial evaluations are completed within state timelines.
- Special education files were well organized.
- Classroom observations were conducted for students determined eligible as having a specific learning disability. Students were fully included in all activities within the general education classroom and a clear correlation between IEP services, goals, and student needs was observed.
- Confidentiality procedures are in place within the school building (i.e. records are stored in a locking cabinet with records of access easily located on the front of the file). Staff are trained annually on confidentiality procedures.
- A positive rapport/relationship between teaching staff and students with disabilities was observed.
- FFY 2005 Annual Performance Report (APR) requirements were met.
- Odyssey Charter School utilized direct instruction techniques school-wide. Instructors are frequently observed by administrative personnel and are provided with frequent verbal and written feedback regarding their instructional performance to ensure fidelity of instruction.
- School has a philosophy of acceptance and education for all students.
- A variety of assessments were utilized during student evaluations.
- Visual tracking of student progress allows for easy identification of struggling students. The tracking system is maintained in a secure environment.
- Assistive technology, such as FM systems and Alpha Smarts, are utilized for some students. In addition, the school has a planner system to help students and parents track homework and class materials.
- Ongoing collaboration occurs between special education and general education staff, as reported by school personnel and parents.
- Positive behavior supports (PBS) are implemented school-side and include a positive reinforcement system.

#### **Parent Involvement**

- Parents are generally happy with the program; they like the department's quarterly newsletters, progress reporting and open communication.
- Parents provided good input for IEP meetings, bringing their knowledge from home and advising accordingly.
- Parents report receiving verbal explanations of their procedural safeguards at each IEP meeting and copies are provided when required or requested.
- Parent training was provided by the Utah Parent Center (UPC) on reviewing and understanding the IEP.
- Consent for evaluation is documented prior to conducting the evaluation.
- Parents are provided with written prior notice of proposed activities, including evaluation, eligibility determination, IEP implementation, placement review, and change of placement.
- Procedural Safeguards are provided and explained to parents at least annually, as documented in special education files and reported by parents.
- Parents receive copies of evaluation summary reports, eligibility determinations, and IEPs, as documented during file reviews
- Parent input is sought after during evaluations and IEPs and documented in the special education files.
- IEPs document that the IEP team has considered and determined how and when parents will receive reports of student progress on IEP goals.
- Parents volunteer at the school and participate in committees, including the UPIPS Stakeholder Steering Committee.
- A library of resources and books regarding students with disabilities is available to all parents; the library was developed based on parent input.

- The school has an open door policy in which parents are invited to visit any classroom at any time.
- Parents are involved in the school disciplinary policy in a positive manner.
- Parents, when interviewed, stated that they feel “valued” when offering suggestions to school personnel.
- Odyssey Charter School has developed parent brochures outlining areas of special focus at the school.
- Parents, during the focus group, expressed appreciation for the special education staff at Odyssey Charter School.
- Notice of meetings are documented for eligibility meetings.
- Parents report that the school facilitates their involvement as a means of improving services for their students.

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

- Weekly staff/TAT meetings occur with staff.
- Students attend their annual IEP meetings.
- Assistive technology is considered for each student and provided when determined necessary by the IEP team.
- All IEPs are current, reviewed at least annually, and included in special education files.
- IEPs included a listing of special education, as well as the location and amount of services needed.
- Accommodations are listed on the IEP and provided to teachers during collaboration meetings and through copies of needed IEP information.
- Special education meetings (SERT) are held monthly to review student needs and provide training.
- IEPs address how the students will access the general education curriculum, as well as participate in U-PASS.
- Decisions regarding student placement is made by the IEP team. Placement discussions begin at the general education classroom progress up the continuum as needed.
- IEPs are developed collaboratively with all required team members. Students are invited to attend IEP meetings.
- Students, when interviewed, could describe the IEP process and see the positive effects that special education has had on their academic progress.
- School has planned interim alternative educational settings (IAES) options in case of future need.
- School staff are aware of accommodations and are willing to provide those in all settings.
- Odyssey Charter School has a positive school-wide behavior support and disciplinary policy. Students are explicitly taught expectations. A positive school chant is repeated daily with all students.
- All students have full access to the general curriculum.
- General education teachers participate in IEP meetings and are provided with a confidential summary sheet of relevant student IEP goals and accommodations.
- IEP meetings are scheduled at mutually agreeable times, as reported by parents.
- Parents feel that their students consistently receive IEP services and are making progress towards their IEP goals.
- Extended school year (ESY) decisions are discussed and documented by the IEP team.

### **Transitions**

- Odyssey Charter School does not have students of transition age at this time.

### **Disproportionality**

- Odyssey Charter School does not have a disproportionate number of students with disabilities or suspensions for students with disabilities, in comparison to the general education population.

### **Areas of Systemic Noncompliance\***

- Evaluation Procedures: Some areas of concern are not assessed during evaluation; current eligibility determinations were not documented; evaluation procedures not followed;
  - Specific Learning Disability Category –RTI documentation did not include a statement that the student does not achieve adequately for the student’s age or to meet State-approved grade-level standards.
  - Specific Learning Disability Category – RTI documentation did not include strategies for increasing the student’s rate of learning.
- Notice of Meeting for IEP and placement review not documented.
- IEP Content: PLAAFPS did not contain baseline/current data or contain a statement of how disability affects access to and progress in the general curriculum; IEP annual goals were not measurable; IEP goals did not address all areas of need.
- Assessment of English proficiency not included for student whose primary home language is other than English.

\*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.