

**Utah Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS)
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT
Piute School District
September 21, 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 in Piute School District on April 22 and 23, 2009 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

- Data collection created a positive interaction among teachers and resulted in better understanding of file contents.
- A regular file review policy has been established.
- Parents and teachers generally feel that special education services have vastly improved over the past few years.
- Parents felt that the special education staff members were organized and concerned for the progress of their students.
- Files are maintained in locking filing cabinets with access authorization lists posted and record of access forms included in student files.
- Initial evaluations are conducted within 45 school days of receiving parent consent.
- The IEP team reviews existing evaluation data and determines whether additional data are needed for determining continuing eligibility.
- Evaluations were sufficiently comprehensive to identify all of the student's special education and related service needs.
- Students meet the categorical eligibility criteria of one of the disability categories.
- Students are reevaluated at least once every three years.
- Student special education files include current eligibility determination documentation.
- Eligibility determinations are made by a group of qualified professionals and parents, as documented by signatures on eligibility determination forms.
- Small district promotes an atmosphere of close communication and frequent contact between staff, students, teachers and parents.
- Teachers show a caring attitude toward students as reported during interviews with district staff.
- Teachers report that the referral process is efficient and works well.
- School principals have knowledge of individual students and provide input in the evaluation and IEP process, as reported by parents during the parent focus group.
- A consistent file organization system is utilized throughout the district.
- A student demographic page is included in the front of student special education files.
- The evaluation teams considered CRT data during eligibility determinations.

- Orientation and Mobility assessments are included in student files as needed.
- There is an incentive for excellence program implemented in the high school to help students stay motivated throughout the last quarter of school, which tracks academic performance and provides a school trip at the end of the school year.
- School staff reports a desire to attend additional professional development to help improve their skills and services for students with disabilities.

Parent Involvement

- Most parents expressed that they felt informed about and participated in the special education process.
- Parents are contacted regularly through progress reports, phone calls, and personal visits.
- Consent for evaluation/reevaluation is included in student files.
- Parents are provided with written prior notice of evaluation/reevaluation, eligibility, IEP implementation, initial placement, and maintaining placement.
- Parental input was used in determining eligibility as documented by parent signatures on forms.
- Parents are given a copy of eligibility determination documentation and IEPs.
- Consent for initial placement is included in 100% of applicable reviewed files.
- If Extended School Year (ESY) services are needed, written prior notice is provided to the parents regarding the goals, services and amount of time.
- Parents report that staff are accessible to parents and that the district has an open door policy for parents.
- Student special education files contained notice of meeting for eligibility determination meetings and IEP meetings.
- Parents report that school staff are helping students with both social and academic issues.
- Parents have the opportunity to share their expertise with school staff to help with the needs of their students, as reported by parents during the parent focus group.
- Parents report that their input is listened to and valued by the school staff, including school and district administration.
- Parents are encouraged to participate in professional development opportunities that are provided by the school district.
- Parents report that the general education teachers are providing the accommodations and supports needed for students with disabilities in the general education environment.
- Parents are pleased with the child find process and the positive impact it has had on their student's success.
- All school staff are able to describe the parent procedural safeguards.
- Power School program enables and encourages parents to be informed of their child's ongoing academic performance.
- Piute School District staff listens to and considers parental input in the evaluation and IEP process as reported by parents during the parent focus group.
- Parents report that the IEP team explains the IEP in detail, including the impact the proposed goals and services could have on students with disabilities.

Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment

- IEP goals are developed focusing on students having access to the general curriculum.
- Currently all students attend general education classes during a portion of the school day.
- Student schedules are monitored carefully to meet requirements and students are included in as many regular education classes and activities as possible, including sports, musical productions, band, yearbook club, vocational club, drill team, and cheerleading.
- General education teachers are aware of students with disabilities in their classrooms and willingly accommodate their needs.
- General education teachers communicate regularly with the special education department regarding student needs.
- Current IEPs are included in all reviewed student special education files.
- Initial IEPs are developed within thirty calendar days following eligibility determination.

- IEP documents the participation of all required IEP team members through signatures on IEP forms.
- Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) statements include baseline or current data and how the disability affects involvement/progress in the general curriculum.
- A description of short-term objectives is included in IEPs for students participating in Utah's Alternative Assessment (UAA).
- IEP goals address areas of educational need as identified in the PLAAFP statement.
- IEPs contain a statement of specific special education services.
- IEPs contain a description of how the student's progress toward meeting the annual goals will be measured, and when periodic reports on progress will be provided to parents.
- IEPs contain a description of related services for students as needed.
- Initial placement began as soon as possible following the development of the IEP.
- School administrators have dual roles as LEA and general education teacher which provides a more in-depth knowledge of student's strengths and needs during the IEP process as reported during the parent focus group and staff interviews.
- Data from U-PASS assessments is utilized and encourages changes in instruction, as reported during staff interviews.
- Piute school district's preschool program is inclusive.
- Piute school district staff has attended recent Utah Preschool Outcomes Data (UPOD) training.
- Piute school district staff understands the IDEA behavior and discipline procedures for students with disabilities.
- Piute school district has high graduation rates and very low drop-out rates for students with disabilities.

Transitions

- Programs for students ages 3-5 are provided through district preschool programs.
 - Preschool and Head Start programs work together.
 - High school students participate in their own transition planning.
 - Some high school students are able to attend higher education technology courses during their senior year.
 - School staff are knowledgeable regarding the early childhood transition process which will ensure a smooth transition from part C to part B.
 - Complete transition plans are included in all applicable student files.
 - Transition plans include evidence of post-secondary training or education goals, employment goals, and independent living goals where appropriate.
 - IEPs document that post-secondary goals are based on age-appropriate transition assessments.
 - IEPs contain annual IEP goals that will reasonably enable the student to meet the post-secondary goals.
 - IEPs contain transition services focused on improving the academic achievement of the student to facilitate movement from school to post-school.
- Transition plans contain a course of study.

Disproportionality

- Primary home language and race/ethnicity are included in student special education files.
- Forms are provided to parents to parents in Spanish when needed.
- Translators are present at IEP and eligibility determination meetings as documented by signatures on forms.

Areas of Systemic Noncompliance*

- Reevaluation summary reports were not completed in 100% of reviewed files.
- Evaluation summary reports were not completed in 14% of applicable reviewed files.

- Documentation that a variety of assessment tools and strategies were used to gather relevant data that was used in determining eligibility missing in 14% of applicable reviewed files.
- Notice of meeting for review of placement missing in 17% of applicable reviewed files.
- IEP Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) statements do not include how the disability affects the students' involvement in the general curriculum.
- IEP timelines are not met in 50% of applicable reviewed files.
- Placement not reviewed annually in 50% of applicable reviewed files.
- IEPs do not contain measurable goals in 14% 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.*