

**Utah Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS)
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT
Renaissance Academy
February 13, 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 Renaissance Academy on November 19, 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

- Training was provided to teachers and aides on IEPs, accommodations and confidentiality. Teachers and aides maintain confidentiality of files.
- Paraeducators monitor students with disabilities to ensure progress is being made on IEP goals. The data from weekly monitoring reports is provided to the special education teacher as well as provided to parents in progress reports.
- All special education paraeducators have passed the Praxis exam, making them highly qualified. Paraeducators have also been trained on the school-wide curriculum.
- Several of the teachers are working on credentials and higher degrees. This will help them become more effective in the classroom. Many are working on becoming highly qualified teachers and working on obtaining their master's degree. The special education teacher is highly qualified.
- Special education files were organized in binders and stored in a secure environment with Record of Access forms included in files.
- General education teachers were able to describe the referral process.
- Special education services are provided in the general education classroom for some students with disabilities.
- Twice monthly paraprofessionals are provided with instructional training which directly relates to their job responsibilities.
- Eligibility determinations were current and completed within timelines (initial and reevaluations).
- Evaluation Summary Reports included assessment results.
- Evaluations for specific learning disabilities included classroom observations.
- Evidence of correction of self-identified compliance errors was documented within special education files.

Parent Involvement

- Parents are pleased overall with the special education services being provided for their students. They are informed about IEP meetings in advance and are sent home a draft of the IEP to give them an opportunity to review it and to be better prepared to take an active role in the IEP meeting as part of the IEP team.

- Parents know and generally understand their rights with regards to the IEP and special education procedures. These rights are explained at every IEP meeting and the procedural safeguards are given to the parents to help them understand their rights and responsibilities.
- Communication with parents takes place through RenWeb, where parents receive frequent progress reports and notices of activities and meetings.
- Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in all aspects of the school's programs.
- A school newsletter is sent home regularly. In addition, if parents have problems accessing RenWeb, the school sends home hard copies of reports and letters to keep parents informed.
- Parents are invited to serve on school committees and a parent participates on the UPIPS Steering Committee.
- Parents are included in some school trainings. In addition, Parent Nights are available for additional training opportunities.
- Parents, during the parent focus group, described how their input was solicited and considered during eligibility and IEP meetings. This was also documented in special education files.
- Consent for evaluation and initial placement was included in special education files.
- Parents are provided with written prior notice of evaluation, eligibility determination, IEP implementation, and placement.
- Procedural Safeguards are provided to parents, as documented in special education files.
- Notices of Meetings are provided to parents prior to meetings.
- Parents are provided with copies of required documents.
- IEPs describe how and when progress will be measured on IEP goals. Special education files contain documentation of ongoing progress reports.

Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment

- In writing each IEP, the team focuses on how to best meet the student's individual needs and to help him or her progress in the general curriculum.
- Observable and measurable goals are developed relating to the state core curriculum.
- Each student's appropriate placement is chosen by the IEP team and the student's daily schedule is directed toward individual student achievement and progress toward annual goals on the IEP.
- In general, students with disabilities are making progress within the LEA. This is monitored regularly through weekly DIBELS progress monitoring in reading comprehension and curriculum-based assessments.
- Students with disabilities are notified of all school activities and special programs such as assemblies, field trips, library visits, school plays and class projects, and they are expected to participate with their non-disabled peers. Accommodations are made available when needed to ensure full participation.
- Literacy program in Renaissance Academy allows for specialized instruction to occur in the general education classroom.
- Students described the purpose of an IEP and participating in IEP meetings during the student focus group.
- Students do not miss core instruction for special education services; schedules have been coordinated to ensure students with disabilities receive core instruction in the general education classroom.
- Students with disabilities are provided with assessments prior to and after school breaks to look at regression and recoupment rates.
- During the general classroom observation, peer buddies and differentiated instruction were observed.
- Paraprofessionals provided additional support in the general education classroom for students with disabilities.
- IEPs contain specific special education and related services.
- Related service providers attend and participate in IEP meetings, as documented by signatures.
- Current IEPs are included in special education files.
- Present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP) statements include baseline or current data and describe how the disability affects progress in the general education curriculum.

- Goals are measurable and address areas of need identified in the PLAAFP.
- Placement decisions are made by a team of all required team members and a continuum service options are available.

Transitions

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

Disproportionality

- Renaissance Academy has a lottery system, therefore students are picked at random, and not based race or disability.
- When compared to local population and state average data, students in the Renaissance Academy Charter School are classified following both state and district policy, resulting in average number of classifications by disability category and ethnicity.
- All assessments for special education consideration and identification are given, whenever possible, in the student's native language. Renaissance Academy has certified interpreter and ASL and ELL certified personnel.
- All students at Renaissance Academy are identified as eligible under the IDEA following SEA and LEA policies and procedures, which ensure those from ethnic and racial minority backgrounds are not over identified at Renaissance Academy.
- Student's primary home language and race/ethnicity are documented in 100% of student files.

Areas of Systemic Noncompliance*

- Evaluations not sufficiently comprehensive in 33% of files.
- Evaluation procedures not followed in 50% of files.
 - MD Eligibility: Prior medical history not documented in 50% of files.
- Review of Existing Data not documented for reevaluations in 100% of applicable reviewed files.
- Notice of Meeting for IEP meetings not documented in 33% of applicable reviewed files.
- Notice of Meeting for annual review of placement not documented in 33% of applicable reviewed files.
- IEP timelines exceeded in 100% of applicable reviewed files.
- Initial IEPs were not developed within 30 calendar days following eligibility determination 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.*