

**Utah Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS)**  
**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT**  
**Spectrum Academy**  
**March 30, 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 Spectrum Academy on December 16, 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**

- Through the evaluation process the administration and faculty were able to solidify Rtl tier criteria and formulate a plan to better serve students in each tier.
- Special education staff were able to work together to thoroughly review special education files which yielded positive results, especially in the areas of evaluation and reevaluation timelines, evaluation and eligibility procedures, and forms used. Staff members were able to realize the growth that has occurred over the past year in terms of their knowledge on policy and procedures.
- New procedures and forms were put in place and personnel appointed to monitor a set number of IEP files per month in order to ensure continued compliance.
- All faculty and staff members are working on enhancing their skills and effectiveness in the classroom. Some by attending Master's programs in special education, others through extensive professional development.
- Through the school improvement planning process, faculty and staff were able to determine student academic and social areas of needed improvement which led to a determination of how to proceed with future professional development.
- Through the UPIPS process the administration and Board were able to approve and put into effect necessary policies and procedures that would benefit the students and the school in general.
- Faculty and administration determined the evaluation tools and materials used by the school are appropriate, valid and reliable.
- Teachers and staff are very conscientious about and are fully trained in best practices regarding confidentiality of student IEP information.
- Spectrum Academy has had zero formal complaints or due process actions taken regarding any special education related matters.
- All teachers are within prescribed caseload limits.
- Special education files were well-organized which facilitated easy review.
- The use of existing data for initial evaluations was documented.
- Files were located in locking filing cabinets with access authorization lists posted and contained record of access forms.

- Spectrum Academy has developed a school-wide social skills program that is implemented on a daily basis.
- There is a high level of collaboration between and among all staff.
- Highly individualized instruction that is data-driven was observed during classroom observations.
- School-wide discipline program is effective and consistently implemented.
- Initial evaluation timelines were met in 100% of applicable reviewed files.
- Reevaluation timelines were met in 100% of applicable reviewed files.
- Current eligibility determination forms were included in 100% of applicable reviewed files.
- A variety of assessment tools and strategies were used to determine eligibility.
- Evaluation procedures were followed in 100% of applicable reviewed files.
- Eligibility determinations were made by the full team as documented by signatures on the eligibility determination report.

### **Parent Involvement**

- Survey results indicated that parents are very pleased with the special education program overall.
- 100% of parents indicated they received procedural safeguards.
- 96% of parents indicated they had their rights explained so they could understand them.
- 100% of parents indicated they signed consent form before evaluation, had the opportunity to provide input during their child's evaluation, and the evaluation team listened and considered their input.
- Parents reported that IEP meetings were scheduled at mutually agreeable times.
- All necessary personnel, including parents, attended the IEP meetings.
- The IEP team asked for and used parents input during the IEP process.
- Parents feel that all of their child's needs are addressed at IEP meetings.
- Parents reported that accommodations and modifications were discussed.
- Parents were informed and signed initial placement form prior to placement in special education.
- Parents feel their child's IEP is being implemented appropriately.
- Related services are helping students benefit from special education, as reported by parents.
- Parents feel empowered to have a positive effect on quality of child's program.
- Parents report good communication between the special education teachers and the parents.
- Parent Empowerment Nights take place monthly, during which parents receive training based on parent surveys.
- Parents reported that their input is welcomed and considered in all decisions made.
- Written prior notice is provided to parents at appropriate times and for all proposed actions.
- Parents are provided with copies of evaluation summary reports, eligibility determination forms, and IEPs, as documented by signatures in special education files.
- Notice of Meeting for IEP meetings were included in 100% of applicable reviewed files.
- Parental input was used in determining eligibility and to gather relevant information regarding student involvement and progress in the general curriculum as documented by signatures in special education files, and as reported by parents at the parent focus group.
- IEPs contain a statement of how progress toward IEP goals will be measured and when periodic reports on progress will be provided to parents.
- Consent for initial placement was included in 100% of applicable reviewed files.
- Parents reported that their procedural safeguards were explained so they understood them.
- IEP meeting were scheduled at mutually agreeable times, as reported by parents at the parent focus group.

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

- IEP meetings are a positive experience for the parents and students.
- IEPs are focused on student achievement with goals being drawn from the general core curriculum.

- Teachers have a firm knowledge on how to write Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) statements. This serves to provide a firm foundation for the team to write measurable, observable, mutually agreeable IEP goals.
- Related service providers are heavily involved in classroom activities and training teachers on how to integrate occupational therapy and speech/language goals in the context of daily instruction. Faculty and staff are able to access related service providers regularly to consult regarding better ways to serve their students.
- All families with children who attend Spectrum Academy have chosen to have their children educated here.
- Typical peers can be found in most classrooms. Behavioral, social, and academic data have proven Spectrum to be the least restrictive environment for our students.
- Students are able to join in a variety of activities with neighboring charter schools with typical peers.
- Extended School Year (ESY) is carefully discussed on by the IEP team for each student and offered when needed.
- All students participated in state-wide assessments.
- Staff have been trained on and know procedures to implement behavior intervention plans as needed.
- Accommodations, modifications, and related services are implemented with fidelity according to student needs. The IEP team truly analyzes the needs of the student in order to implement what will be most beneficial, regardless of time or monetary constrains.
- All students are taught using the Utah core curriculum.
- Spectrum Academy has a school-wide positive behavior program that utilizes least restrictive behavioral initiatives.
- Teachers are consistently implementing positive behavior program and social skills program in all areas of the school.
- Full team participation in IEP meetings was documented by signatures on IEPs.
- Current IEPs were included in 100% of applicable reviewed files.
- Present levels of achievement and academic functional performance (PLAAFP) statements included baseline data and how the disability effects the student's involvement and progress in the general curriculum.
- IEPs contain specific special education and related services.
- IEPs contain a statement of any individual appropriate accommodations that are necessary for students to participate in State-wide assessments.
- School staff demonstrate an understanding of Utah Special Education Rules, including procedural safeguards.

### **Transitions**

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

### **Disproportionality**

- There are 144 students who attend Spectrum Academy, of which 125 receive special education and related services.
- The school was formed to serve students with disabilities.
- Most of our students have been identified prior to attending our school.
- Primary home language is documented in all student files.

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

- No documentation that IEP team that includes parents, reviewed existing evaluation data to determine if additional data are needed to determine if the student continues to need special education and related services in 20% of applicable reviewed files.
- Notice of Meeting for eligibility determination missing in 22% of applicable reviewed files.

- Notice of Meeting for placement review missing in 33% of applicable reviewed files.
- Initial IEPs were not developed within 30 calendar days following eligibility determination in 50% of applicable reviewed files.
- IEPs were not reviewed periodically, not less than annually, in 20% of applicable reviewed files.
- IEPs do not contain measurable goals in 11% of applicable reviewed files.
- IEP goals do not address all areas of need identified in the PLAAFP statement in 11% 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.*