

Utah Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS)
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT
WALDEN SCHOOL
June 29, 2006

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 district programs, USOE-SES, the Utah Personnel Development Center, parents, and advocates.

The first phase of this process included the completion of the Self-Assessment and the development of a Program Improvement Plan. The second phase, On-Site Validation, conducted in Walden School on April 18, 2006, included student record reviews, interviews with school administrators, teachers, parents, and students. Parent surveys were also mailed to a small sample of parents. Information from these data sources was shared in an exit meeting attended by staff from Walden School and members of the Steering Committee.

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

- All Walden teachers are required to attend any special education training made available by the special education teacher.
- The structure of the school and low student to teacher ratio make individualized instruction a standard benefit for all students.
- Walden's original charter included the goal to create a unique educational plan for every student.
- Students with disabilities feel included with their classmates.
- CRT test scores of 20% of students with disabilities went from "minimal" and "partial mastery" to "substantial mastery" in both language arts and math.
- Student centered environment; students are involved in their own learning processes and are allowed to participate in choosing projects according to their learning style.
- Pre-referral interventions are documented, and include parent contact logs as a data source.
- Special education files include the use of U-PASS data.
- Strong CRT scores for both students with and without disabilities in language arts and math.
- Caseloads are within maximum limits.
- Innovative curriculum is designed by the teachers following state core.
- School faculty hold weekly meetings to discuss student needs.
- Students are aware of and follow school expectations.

Parent Involvement

- Parents feel that the school personnel care for their students.
- Parents report receiving notification of IEP meetings b phone and email and receiving copies of IEPs.
- Parents feel that they are listened to by school staff.
- Parents listed strengths of the special education program as: teacher's willingness to provide accommodations, paraeducator assistance, smaller class sizes, more individualized attention, and frequent contact with teachers regarding their student.

Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment

- 100% of students with disabilities participated in statewide assessments.
- Accommodations were listed clearly on student IEPs using an accommodations worksheet designed for general education teachers.
- Students receive reasonable U-PASS accommodations.
- General education teachers are actively involved in the IEP process.

- Walden School makes statewide assessment a positive experience for all students by providing daily activities during testing such as yoga, breakfast, breaks, etc.
- Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) statements contained evidence of functional performance and how the disability affects the student's progress in the general education classroom.
- Very few instances of problem behavior resulting in a need for disciplinary procedures and consequences.
- Students with disabilities observed in a general education math classroom received additional teacher assistance, as well as accommodations such as written notes to study for a quiz.

Transitions

- Walden School did not have students of transition age at this time.

Disproportionality

- School ethnicity and disability rates are comparable to state rates and charter school enrollment.
- Walden School reported no suspension/expulsions for longer than 10 days during the 2004-2005 school year.
- School is at enrollment limit; enrollment determined through application and lottery, as per Utah law, and is not discriminatory towards students with disabilities.

Areas of Systemic Noncompliance*

- ✓ **Copies to parents of Eligibility Determination form and Evaluation Summary Reports not documented.**
- ✓ **Notice of Meetings for IEP, Placement, and Eligibility meetings missing or incomplete.**
- ✓ **Written Notice for Evaluation and Placement not documented.**
- ✓ **Eligibility Determination did not document participation by all required participants (parents).**
- ✓ **Evaluation Procedures not followed: initial evaluation not completed with 60 days of receiving parent consent; Response to Intervention approach used by school did not include data on student's response to intervention included in the Evaluation Summary Report; a description of the instructional environment in which the observation took place not included in the Evaluation Summary Report; a signature from each required team member not included in the Evaluation Summary Report.**
- ✓ **IEP PLAAFP statements did not include baseline data.**
- ✓ **IEP goals did not address all areas of need.**
- ✓ **Placement did not begin as soon as possible following IEP meeting.**

*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.