

URBAN COLLABORATIVE SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDY REPORT | ACTION PLAN

Recommendations from the Collaborative's 2016-2017 school year study are followed by SPS action steps with the associated timeline and leadership groups.

ACTION PLAN LEADERSHIP

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OVERVIEW

In 2017, Spokane Public Schools (SPS) requested that the Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative (the Collaborative) conduct a comprehensive review of programs and services offered by the school district to students with disabilities (data studied from 2015-2016 school year). This request was made in effort to support the district in understanding where improvements could be made to reinforce best practices in special education. In response to the report, SPS has addressed all 20 of the recommended tactics with strategic action steps.

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION & INTERNAL STRUCTURES TO SUPPORT STUDENT LEARNING

01 Create organizational charts using parallel terms and formats, define and name people in roles, and include dates when new organizational charts are developed to record changes. These organizational charts should be made public so all staff and administrators have access to them.

2017-2018 | Teaching & Learning Leadership Team

- District staff revised the Teaching and Learning Department organizational chart prior to the start of the 2017-2018 school year.
- A department roster was created to outline roles and contact information for all members of the department.
- The Special Education Department is now situated inside of the Teaching and Learning Department to foster better collaboration.
- The Special Education Department will update an organizational chart to outline the roles and responsibilities specific to special education staff before the end of the 2017-2018 school year.

02 Develop collaborative structures across departments to support district-wide initiatives and develop supportive processes at the building level.

2017-2018 | Teaching & Learning Leadership Team

- Prior to the end of the 2016-2017 school year, as the Special Education Department was incorporated into the Teaching and Learning Department, the Special Education Director became a member of the Teaching and Learning Department Leadership Team.
- Secondary Level Support and Elementary Level Support meetings were initiated to enhance coordination between all members of the Teaching and Learning Department that serve specific school levels.
- Content Learning Teams for each curriculum area and a Special Education Advisory Team will launch during the 2017-2018 school year. These teams are intended to enhance collaboration and coordination related to curricu-

"Together we educate students with diverse needs through active engagement and meaningful relationships in inclusive environments."

-Special Education Department Mission Statement

lum, instruction, and assessment, and will incorporate special education staff in conversations related to the provision of special education services.

- To enhance implementation and support, a District Multiple Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Model will be developed. This will involve school level MTSS training on student identification and coordination of interventions.

03 Develop a vision and a strategic plan for the Special Education Department to focus on department initiatives over the next three years.

2017-2018 | Special Education Leadership Team

- The Special Education Department developed a mission, vision, and value statements for the department in the fall of the 2017-2018 school year. This process was completed by January of 2018.
- The Teaching and Learning Department implemented a new strategic planning process to coordinate terminology and structures that supports district strategic planning, level work plans, and school improvement planning.
- This new structure, now involving the Special Education Department, will use various sources (including the Urban Collaborative Report) to develop specific tactics that will be incorporated as a part of the Teaching and Learning Department Plan for the next three years.

04 Consider investing in a special education data management system that moves the district from a paper-based model to an electronically-based model that will have one district-wide point of access, which can focus practice, cut down on unnecessary paperwork, track compliance rates, and generate reports for future planning.

2017-2020 | Special Education Leadership Team

- Prior to the end of the 2017-2018 school year, the Special Education Leadership Team will form a committee to explore the selection of a new special education data management and IEP development system.
- This committee will solicit input from stakeholders

regarding current data management needs, review of available products, product selection, system integrations, data migration, and professional development. A subsequent full implementation plan will be forthcoming.

- Phase #1 of the process occurs in the spring of 2018, and involves the exploration and product selection process.
- Phase #2, which focuses on systems integration, data migration, and professional development, is projected to occur between the fall of 2018 and the summer of 2019.
- Phase #3 represents full implementation and is targeted for the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year.

05 Culture and climate should be closely analyzed across the district to ensure staff and families feel comfortable voicing their opinions and concerns regarding special education.

2017-2018 | Special Education Leadership Team

- The Assessment Department will develop a survey to monitor student, staff, and family perception of Special Education Department's effectiveness and services.
- The Special Education Director and assigned coordinator will meet with every principal individually to share information and gather feedback regarding Special Education services.
- The Special Education Director will continue to visit each Special Education classroom, connecting with all Special Education staff members several times each year, aiming to listen to their successes and challenges while continuing to be a supportive presence and resource.
- To enhance parent/guardian partnerships, the Special Education Department will continue to explore additional opportunities, beyond Special Education Parent Advisory Committees (SEPAC), for families to access answers to questions, share perceptions, and offer feedback.
- A Special Needs Student Parent Liaison has been hired to assist with communication and serve as a bridge between school staff and parents.

ACRONYMS AT A GLANCE

IDEA

Individuals with
Disabilities
Education Act

FAPE

Free Appropriate
Public Education

SEPAC

Special Education
Parent Advisory
Committee

MTSS

Multi-Tiered
Systems of Support

FBA

Functional
Behavioral
Assessment

IEP

Individualized
Education Plan

SDI

Specially Designed
Instruction

BIP

Behavior
Intervention Plan

PBIS

Positive Behavioral
Interventions and
Supports

CEIS

Coordinated Early
Intervening Services

DEMOGRAPHICS CLASSIFICATION & EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

06 Evaluate criteria for classifying students with disabilities, checking to ensure that classification criteria are up-to-date, entrance criteria are well-developed, and there is fidelity of using those criteria to ensure that students who are classified as having a disability are done so appropriately, paying specific attention to classification of health impairment, which is high in the district and English learners with disabilities, which is low in the district.

2017-2018 | Special Education Leadership Team

- The Special Education Department analyzed the Special Education Classifying Criteria to ensure that the process is comprehensive, meets compliance requirements, and is implemented with fidelity.
- Based on the analysis, the team has confirmed that the current criteria for classifying students with disabilities is compliant and consistent with state law.
- To ensure coherence and compliance, the Special Education Department will provide school staffs on-going training with regard to the Special Education referral process.

07 Track educational placement data to better understand and address more restrictive placements of students with health impairments, developmental delay, emotional/behavioral disorders, autism, and intellectual disabilities and develop processes to make decisions that are more inclusive.

2017-2018 | Special Education Leadership Team

- The Special Education Leadership Team is collecting and monitoring monthly Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Data in specialized programs and across the system to ensure that each student's educational placement is appropriate.
- In partnership with the Assessment Department, data collection processes and visualizations will be developed to support ongoing monitoring and continuous improvement.
- Currently, the Special Education Director and Coordinators are meeting with every elementary and secondary principal to share their building's LRE data. During these discussions, areas of strength are noted as well as opportunities for growth with respect to the information presented.

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HIGH-QUALITY & INCLUSIVE INSTRUCTION WITHIN A SYSTEM OF TIERED SUPPORTS

08 Develop an MTSS model and disseminate it district-wide with an accountability system in place to monitor implementation and provide training to staff.

2017-2018 | Teaching & Learning Leadership Team

- The Teaching and Learning Department is in the process of constructing a District Multiple Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Model for district-wide implementation. This involves selecting an MTSS Framework and launching an elementary and secondary work-group to outline and develop interventions for each tier of the MTSS Model.
- MTSS work-groups will convene in February. As current interventions are incorporated into the model and potential new interventions are identified, as necessary, sub-committees will meet to revise or plan specific interventions.
- Programmatic details and implementation plans developed by sub-committees will be presented to the work-group for approval.
- Sub-committees will be comprised of broad representation to ensure expertise and stakeholder involvement is robust.

09 Support collaborative partnerships between special and general education staff by building planning time into staff schedules and providing professional development to support effective collaborative and co-teaching practices.

2017-2018 | Special Education Leadership Team

- At the beginning of each school year/semester, Special Education teachers will share “IEP at a Glance” documents with general education teachers to provide key information regarding each student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals, Success Plans, Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs), Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs), accommodations, and modifications.
- BIPs must be included in the IEP and evaluated annually.
- The Director of Special Education has provided professional development for building administrators, which focused on identifying successful collaborative strategies and practices to provide planning time for special and general education staff to work in partnership.
- The Director of Special Education has offered support and guidance to building administrators related to enhancing planning time for special and general education staff to meet prior to the end of each grading period.

10 Create more flexible staffing roles that focus special education staff on their responsibility to students with disabilities but allows for students without disabilities to receive “incidental benefits.”

2017-2018 | Special Education Leadership Team

- As stated in IDEA language, special education staff fulfill their responsibility to provide required supports and services to students with disabilities, but staff can also give support to students without disabilities who may incidentally benefit from their instruction. This has the potential to promote additional support structures and more flexibility with staffing to assist all students who need intervention support.
- Communication regarding the “incidental benefit” language was clarified with all building administrators and staff who provide Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) in February, 2018. Incidental benefit language below:

Part B (non-CEIS) funds provided to an LEA may be used for the costs of special education and related services, and supplementary aids and services, provided in a regular class or other education-related setting to a student with a disability in accordance with the student's Individualized education program (IEP), even if one or more nondisabled children benefit from these services. Such usage, often referred to as incidental benefit, does not diminish an LEA's responsibility under Part B to ensure that FAPE is made available to each eligible child with a disability. Under 34 CFR 300.208(a)(1), IDEA

11 Ensure that all students with disabilities are afforded the opportunity to receive their special education supports and services in their least restrictive environment.

2017-2018 | Special Education Leadership Team

- The Special Education Department collects and monitors monthly LRE data percentages in specialized programs to ensure inclusion is occurring as soon as students are ready to benefit.
- The Special Education Director and building coordinators meet individually with principals to share data and discuss possible areas for growth.
- Consistent with OSPI data collection reporting practices, the Special Education Department collects data and reports each school building’s overall percentage of students in the following domains: 80% or more of the day in the Gen Ed Setting; 40% to 79% of the day in the Gen Ed Setting; 39% or less of the day in the Gen Ed Setting.

"Students persevere and self-advocate to reach their full potential."

-Special Education Department Vision Statement

12 Identify district-wide social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum at both the elementary and secondary level, with a focus on providing training in trauma-sensitive teaching and behavior management and review the current PBIS model to ensure it is implemented at all levels. Designate appropriate staff to support implementation of PBIS at the elementary and secondary levels.

2018-2019 | Teaching & Learning Leadership Team

- MTSS elementary and secondary work-groups will form a sub-committee to evaluate current practices, outline programmatic details, and develop potential implementation plans for review.

13 Improve the Behavior Intervention (BI) program by developing more inclusive options and by focusing on providing effective options for supporting positive behaviors and social emotional growth.

2018-2019 | Teaching & Learning Leadership Team

- MTSS elementary and secondary work-groups will form a sub-committee to evaluate current practices, outline programmatic details, and develop potential implementation plans for review.

14 Eagle Peak must be better connected to the district and to the Special Education Department and can be used as a resource to the district.

2018-2019 | Special Education Leadership Team

- The MTSS secondary work-group will form a sub-committee to evaluate current practices, outline programmatic details, and develop potential implementation plans for review.

15 Ensure that when students are enrolled in the BI program or at Trek, Eagle High, and Summit High in Eagle Peak, Child Find regulations are followed.

2017-2018 | Special Education Leadership Team

- Consultation with legal counsel indicated that the Child Find regulations are being followed appropriately and continue to be compliant with state law.
- Further oversight will be employed to ensure that this practice continues accordingly, along with continued professional development and calibration activities.
- The Assessment and Program Evaluation Department will evaluate staff adherence to these regulations annually.

16 To decrease the suspension rates of students with disabilities, ensure that students are not being suspended due to behaviors that are a manifestation of their disability and that the services students are receiving are effective.

2017-2018 | Special Education Leadership Team

- A Restorative Practices Implementation Plan has been developed to guide professional development utilizing restorative practices to promote healthy relationships, positive discipline, and a safe learning environment through community building and constructive conflict resolution.
- Additional strategies implemented may include: Zones of Regulation, restorative circles, Five-Point Scale, success plans, FBAs and BIPs.
- The implementation plan outlines 7 Pathways for staff to access professional development through a variety of formats.
- A manifestation alert system has been created and implemented to notify school and district leadership regarding suspensions and communicate manifestation requirements. Calibration between school and district personnel will be ongoing.

17 To decrease the rates of restraining and secluding students with disabilities, follow the state's guidance and the guidance outlined in the US Department of Education's Restraint and Seclusion: Resource Document.

2017-2018 | Special Education Leadership Team

- All those administrators and Special Education Staff who have received Restraint and Isolation training, have done so in accordance with the state and federal guidelines.
- System reporting and calibration are tracked to ensure appropriate procedures and practices are followed and compliant with State and Federal law.
- All incidents of isolation and restraint are reviewed daily by the Special Education Department to determine that protocols were implemented with fidelity and adherence to the process was followed appropriately.
- Situations that warrant more study are immediately addressed with staff and administration during a critical debrief process to gain clarity and provide feedback for the purpose of improving future actions.
- The Assessment and Program Evaluation Department will evaluate staff adherence to these guidelines annually.
- Efforts will be made to recognize and celebrate schools for successful implementation of these guidelines.

SPS QUICK FACTS

The Collaborative gathered and analyzed data from the 2015-2016 school year.

110

Central office and school level staff and families interviewed in Study

31,000

SPS students enrolled

68.2%

Caucasian

13.0%

2 or more races

10.2%

Hispanic

3.1%

African American

2.6%

Asian

1.3%

American Indian

16.6%

Of students receive special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

56.7%

Of the student population receives free or reduced-price lunch

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18 To provide the best instructional and assistive technologies for all students, develop collaborative structures that combine the instructional and assistive technology departments.

2017-2018 | Teaching & Learning Leadership Team

- In the fall of 2017, the Teaching and Learning Department initiated an Advisory Team structure for a number of key district functions.
- Advisory teams are comprised of representatives throughout the district and report to the Teaching and Learning Leadership Team to offer recommended improvement tactics.
- An Instructional Technology Advisory Team was also created to be the hub for ongoing monitoring and improvement for the district's use of Instructional Technology in the classroom.

19 The district should consider creating an alternative program or alternative school that can meet the needs of students at risk for educational failure that is separate from a special education school.

2017-2020 | Teaching & Learning Leadership Team

- MTSS elementary and secondary work-groups will form a sub-committee to evaluate current practices, outline programmatic details, and develop potential implementation plans for review by the work-group.

20 In order to create effective and sustained changes, situate the work in a systems change framework.

2017-2018 | Teaching & Learning Leadership Team

- A district framework that outlines the mission, vision, and roadmap for school performance, was launched in the spring of 2017.
- This involved articulating the attributes of high performing schools, and coincided with the development of aligned work plans for each level that are intended to enhance coherence, coordination of resources, collaboration, and the provision of supports.
- New aspects of the district framework were incorporated into the School Improvement Planning process and are closely monitored by School Directors.
- Developing School Improvement Plans within the context of the attributes of high performing schools and aligned to the district framework has fostered a holistic approach to promoting improvement. This included the identification of target populations for each School Improvement Plan Strategy.
- The use of the district framework, level work plans, and the School Improvement Plan process will continued to be monitored to ensure outcomes include effective and sustainable system change.

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