



SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION

Agenda Item# 10.4

Meeting Date: May 1, 2014

Subject: Special Education Services

- Information Item Only
- Approval on Consent Agenda
- Conference (for discussion only)
- Conference/First Reading (Action Anticipated: _____)
- Conference/Action
- Action
- Public Hearing

Department: Academic Office/Special Education Department

Recommendation: To provide an overview of Special Education services, requirements for provision of services, and a snapshot of how services are provided to students with special needs.

Background/Rationale: The Special Education Department oversees the provision of special education services to eligible students as part of its responsibility of the SCUSD Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides a comprehensive set of laws and protections for students with disabilities. The requirements under IDEA, as well as complimentary state laws, provide for a rich and complex array of specially designed instruction and related services to eligible students. These services are provided at no cost to parents to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, and are in addition to the services that a child without a disability receives. Services are available to students from birth to age twenty-two or until students graduate from high school.

Navigation through special education services is complex, multi-faceted and, at times, can be challenging. Through the continuous cycle of improvement, the department continues to address its service delivery, staffing, engagement with parents, shifts in teaching and learning, and the maintenance of the district's compliance.

Financial Considerations: The SCUSD SELPA receives \$22,686,395 in state funding, \$8,273,967 in federal funding, \$3,265,457 for Special Education Transportation and \$48,970,526 in other grants, entitlements and general funds for a total budget of \$83,196,345.

Documents Attached:

Executive Summary

Estimated Time of Presentation: 40 minutes

Submitted by: Olivine Roberts, Ed.D., Chief Academic Officer

Approved by: Sara Noguchi, Ed.D., Interim Superintendent

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I. Overview of Special Education

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides a comprehensive set of laws and protections for students with disabilities. The mandates under IDEA, as well as complimentary state laws, provide for a rich and complex array of specially designed instruction and related services to eligible students. These services are provided at no cost to parents to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, and are in addition to the services that a child without a disability receives. Services are available to eligible students from birth to age twenty-two or until students graduate from high school.

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is developed for eligible students by a team of professionals that include the student (if appropriate), general and special education teachers, nurse, school psychologist, principal or administrative designee, any designated service providers or assessors, i.e., speech and language, adapted physical education, etc., and the student's parent(s) to provide specially designed instruction and related services to meet the student's unique learning needs. The IEP is a formal and legal document which provides evidence over time of the student's receipt of educational benefit in relation to the services that the student receives. The IEP is reviewed at least one time annually to determine student's progress towards goals and objectives and grade level state standards. Triennial assessments are completed every three years to determine that students continue to meet eligibility criteria or to determine the need for additional services. A parent or teacher may also request that the IEP be convened to discuss any concerns or needed changes to the IEP within the year timeframe.

Parents must be regularly informed of their child's progress towards the IEP goals and objectives. They must also be informed in writing of any proposed changes to their student's IEP and be given access to all written materials regarding their student in their primary language unless it is not feasible to do so. Translators are provided during the IEP meeting to insure that parents are able to fully participate and give input about their child.

The district is a single district Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) and is responsible to provide a full continuum of special education services to eligible students. The district currently provides services to 6,300 students which equates to 14% of the total student population. Services are delivered by 264 teachers in a variety of educational settings. One hundred and forty-six (146) additional support staff (i.e. Program Specialists, Psychologists, Nurses, Language Speech and Hearing Specialists, Behavior Intervention Specialists, Social Workers, Vocational Education Specialists, etc. provide a variety of professional educational assessments and services to students. Two hundred thirty-two (232) full time equivalent paraprofessionals support teachers and students in the delivery of direct services. Each of these professionals work

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diligently to insure that students receive educational benefit, make progress towards their IEP goals and objectives, and allow each student to leave our system college and career ready.

II. Driving Governance

Pillar One of the district's Strategic Plan 2010-2014 includes the responsibility to prepare our students for college-career readiness. This responsibility has driven the district's implementation of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the transformation of teaching and learning in SCUSD. Central to this theme is Equity for all students in the district, including students with disabilities.

In addition to this central theme, the district adheres to all applicable federal and state law regarding the provision of special education services. It maintains Board Policies, Administrative Regulations and SELPA Assurances which drive the decisions made within the SELPA.

III. Budget

The budget that supports special education services is derived from multiple sources of federal, state and district funds. Realizing that the average cost to educate a student with an IEP is about two times the cost of educating a student without special needs, the district contributes a significant amount of funds towards the delivery of services and transportation for the students. Below is break down of the revenue the district received for this school year to provide special education services throughout the district. Most of these funds are restricted to specific uses and expenses must be charged to allowable programs and services.

2013-2014 Annual Budget Plan Revenue	
AB 602 (State funds based on district's ADA)	\$22,686,395
IDEA (Federal Funds)	\$ 8,273,967
Special Education Transportation	\$ 3,265,457
Other grants, entitlements and general funds i.e., Educationally Related Mental Health, Workability, Department of Rehabilitation (TPP), State and Federal Preschool, Alternative Dispute Resolution	\$48,970,526
Funds received to provide special education services	\$83,196,345

*Please note: Students receiving special education services in special day classes generate \$10,677,725 in ADA which is listed as part of the district's general fund contribution under LCFF

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IV. Goals, Objectives and Measures

The Special Education Department is fully invested in providing appropriate services to each eligible student. The staff within the department works diligently with families to develop IEP services that will provide each student an educational benefit and progress towards meeting the grade-level CCSS. IEP placement decisions are made through a thoughtful process that includes the engagement of the student's parent to determine the least restrictive educational environment for the student. As such, the district provides supports for eligible students in the general education setting, inclusive practice settings (currently at 14 sites) with co-teaching, traditional resource specialist models, special day classes, nonpublic schools/agencies and State Schools for students who are Blind or Deaf.

In tune with the district's focus on CCSS implementation, the department continues to engage in learning opportunities with staff to insure that current and future decisions regarding the delivery of special education services is made with the big picture in mind. It is acknowledged that the teachers serving special needs students and their families have expressed concern about this massive shift in teaching and learning and its impact on their students. The department is mindful of the need for additional professional learning opportunities to address this and is working collaboratively within the Academic Office to insure that this is addressed.

The department measures the effectiveness in its services in multiple ways. A Special Education Self Review has recently been completed in accordance with California Department of Education (CDE) requirements. Part of this review included a student study of Educational Benefit by evaluating a three- year time period of select students' IEPs to determine if the student made progress toward meeting IEP goals and, if not, that concerns were addressed with additional assessments, goals and objectives and/or services. At the classroom and student level, the department will gather perception data through surveys, evaluations of professional learning, observation of instruction in the classroom, and examination of student work. All of these results will assist the department to make programmatic and systematic improvement to its delivery of services and engagement with families.

V. Major Initiatives

Inclusive Practices

- Six sites (Leataata Floyd, Oak Ridge, Sutterville, Caleb Greenwood, California Middle and CK McClatchy) operate as total Inclusive Practices sites where all students with special needs are provided placement in their grade appropriate general education

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classroom with co-teaching support to provide specialized academic instruction to meet their unique needs.

- Eight sites (H.W. Harkness, James Marshall, W.C. Wood, Rosa Parks, Sutter, Albert Einstein, Hiram Johnson and John F. Kennedy) operate an inclusive co-teaching model in their RSP programs
- Additional sites will be added in 2014-2015 for inclusive co-teaching models in their RSP program (Anticipated addition of seven sites)
- All sites participate in professional learning and follow-up coaching support to refine their co-teaching structures and strategies, and to assess student progress in this delivery model.

Traditional Special Day Class (SDC) Programs

- Continue the increased expectation of teaching and learning in all SDC programs, including implementation of the Common Core Standards.
- Increase the time students in traditional SDC programs spend with their peers without disabilities in general education settings.
- Maintain the balance that has been achieved during the past four years by dividing the department's focus evenly between teaching and learning and maintaining a standard of compliance.
- Continue to return students from Nonpublic Schools/Nonpublic Agencies by expanding district programs to meet their needs.

Transition from School to Adult Life

- Every student receiving special education services through an IEP must have a Transition Plan in place by age 16.
- Transition plans are developed by the IEP team in partnership with the student and his/her family.
- Transition plans serve as a "roadmap" to guide the student, parent and participating staff in moving toward and being prepared for adult life.
- IEP related transition planning has been identified as an area of growth for the department based on teacher and parent feedback and compliance measures from CDE.
- Professional learning opportunities have been provided to staff to assist in the improvement of the overall quality of the transition plans written for students and the

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necessary monitoring to insure that the student is making adequate progress towards his transition to adult life.

- Strong transition assessment, planning, and monitoring will support students with special needs to have a clear idea and step by step process to work through toward their life goals after they graduate or leave our system due to age.

Parent Engagement

- The department continues to strive to improve its relations with the families we serve.
- The Special Education Self Review parent survey process completed in November, 2013 revealed both positive and growth areas for the department to turn its focus.
 - Positive comments regarding parents' understanding of the services their student receives and why they receive them.
 - Growth comments in the areas of insuring that parents understand the triennial assessment process, participation of general education teachers in students' IEPs, understanding of statewide and district testing specific to their child's accommodations for participation, insuring parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for students with special needs, and transition planning.
- The department works closely with its Community Advisory Committee (CAC) to address the need to authentically engage its parents in their child's education through general meetings and targeted professional learning throughout the school year.
- The department has taken a "one family at a time" approach to provide more diligent case management for students and to assist sites when there is need for central office involvement.
 - This prioritization takes time, but the department has found that parent interaction and attention to their needs, particularly in times of transition between segment levels, has netted more positive parent relationships over time.
- More site level professional learning with teachers is needed to improve relations with parents and their participation and involvement in the IEP development and implementation. This component will be called out in some of the monthly training opportunities that are provided to site level staff.

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VI. Results

The Special Education Self Review provided the department a structured opportunity to evaluate its services, policies and processes from a compliance standpoint. There have been growth areas that have come to light due to this review as noted previously. The department will incorporate this need into its professional learning component for the remainder of the school year and into next school year.

The department responded to the call for action from its teachers and parents to provide specific professional learning opportunities designed to address the implementation of CCSS and the access/entry points for students with special needs. A series of trainings for special education teachers are underway and evaluative feedback from the first session indicated that this specific training is meeting teachers' expectation and need for information. Additional parent training for our parents of students with special needs took place in the fall. The evaluative feedback from parents was positive, indicating an increased level of knowledge of what to expect of the teaching and learning in their student's classroom.

Collaborative conversations with teachers, classroom observations during the final part of the year, and examination of student work will assist the department to continue on its continuous cycle of improvement. As part of the Academic Office team, the department has been successful in engaging in multidisciplinary planning, learning and conversations that deepens the awareness and knowledge about students with special needs and the services they receive.

VII. Lessons Learned/Next Steps

- Change is messy and it takes time. The department will continue to strive to improve its interactions with parents in terms of responding to parent concerns and actions regarding their students.
- The IEP development process is time consuming when done well; the department has had to adjust assignments and expectations around this area.
- The implementation of Common Core and the change in the teaching and learning has led the special education leadership team to engage in learning about specific strategies to assist the students to engage in their changing instruction. Topics such as Universal Design for Learning and Executive Function are being studied so that more informed assistance can be provided to teachers in the coming year.

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- The department will continue to look for proactive ways to reduce expenditures; however, there is an expectation at the state and federal level that contributions towards the provision of services cannot dramatically decrease in order for the district to meet its Maintenance of Effort requirement yearly.
- The department will continue to expand Inclusive Practices in the traditional RSP models while it awaits an improved district budget climate which will allow expansion of students from special day classes.