

Lake Washington School District

Special Services Review

Executive Summary

November 2016



Lake Washington School District

Special Services Program Review Executive Summary Report

Introduction

Lake Washington School District (LWSD) is a high-performing public school district serving students and families in the cities of Kirkland and Redmond, Sammamish, and unincorporated King County. LWSD is located between Lake Washington and the Cascade Mountains, to the east of Seattle.

LWSD serves a large and diverse student population in 52 schools, including 31 elementary schools, 13 middle schools, and nine high schools. The district is currently one of the fastest growing school districts in the state of Washington. It is the fourth largest district in the state.

Approximately 12% of LWSD students qualify to receive Special Education Services as required under the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA). Additionally, 4.6% of the student population are qualified for Section 504 plans. They receive accommodations or modifications required under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

LWSD is committed to the success of every student it serves. The district is focused on accomplishing its Mission and Vision for students:

Mission

Each student will graduate prepared to lead a rewarding, responsible life as a contributing member of our community and greater society.

Vision

Every student Future Ready:

- Prepared for college
- Prepared for the global workplace
- Prepared for personal success

Focus of the Program Review

The district values being results-oriented and uses data-informed continuous improvement to evaluate the effectiveness of programs and services. The Special Services Department initiated a program review as part of the district's continuous improvement efforts. Specifically, Special Education and Section 504 programs and services were included in the program review. The program review informed the development of a Special Services Five-Year Action Plan. The program review involved both internal and external review processes.

Data Sources

Urban Collaborative: The Urban Collaborative Leadership Consortium was contracted to provide an evaluation and overview of Special Services in LWSD.

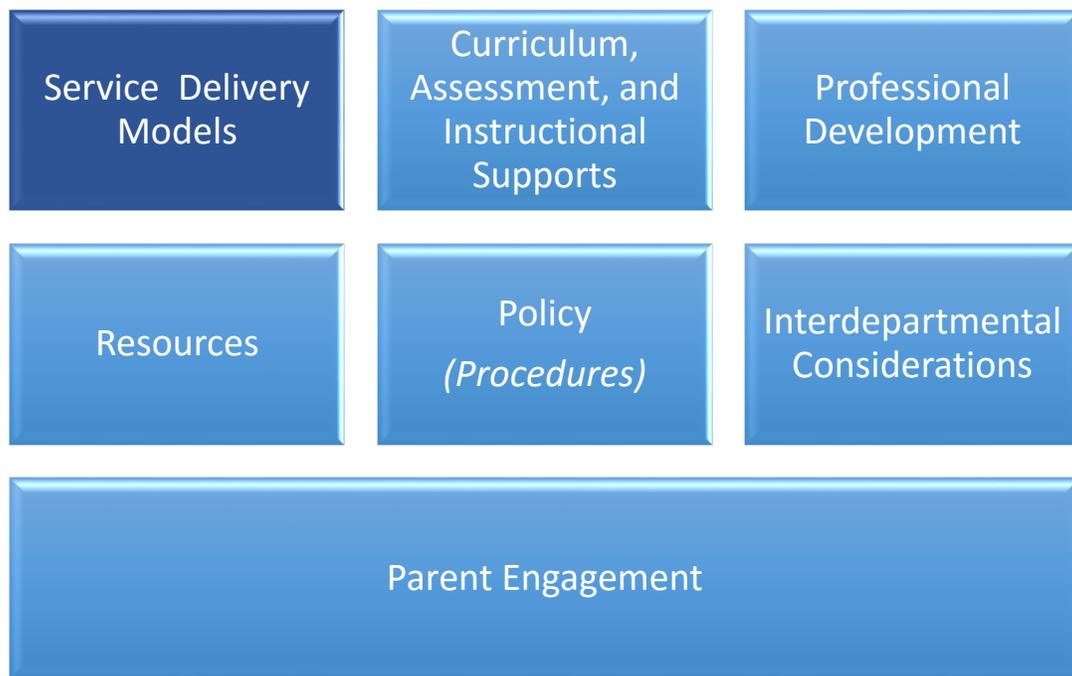
Consolidated Program Review (CPR): As part of the State’s ongoing compliance review, a CPR was conducted during the 2015-16 school year. From this review, the State provided specific action items and recommendations for system changes to help align staff and school practices.

Washington Integrated System of Monitoring (WISM): The purpose of WISM is to promote special education program effectiveness, and ensure state supervision and oversight requirements for special education programs.

Final Report and Action Plan:

Based on the data collected through multiple data sources, the Special Services administrative team identified specific findings and associated actions required for program/department continuous improvement. The Final Report was drafted as a reflection of the findings from the multiple data sources. Associated materials are added to the report as appendices. The Special Services Five-Year Action Plan is outlined, with specific actions and the timelines for each action. Mr. Vine will lead the efforts to research, evaluate and implement the Five-Year Action Plan.

Special Services Program Review Priority Areas 2016



Timeline:

All priority areas have a preliminary timeline for the planning, learning, and implementation. The following key provides information about how to read the visual timeline.

Key:	
Planning and Learning	
Begin Implementation	
Full Implementation	

Service Delivery Models

Special Education Service Delivery Models call for all Special Education and Related Services to be delivered according to the Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP is developed by a team of educators, parents, and the student (when appropriate). Service considerations are made along a continuum of placement options. These options ensure that students with disabilities are, to the maximum extent appropriate, educated with non-disabled peers.

One of the defining principles of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is that students with disabilities should be included in the General Education program as much as possible and not excluded or educated separately. The law requires districts to provide Special Education services in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). The LRE is the educational setting that is closest to the General Education classroom and still allows students to access an appropriate education from which they can benefit.

The LRE is unique to each student’s individual needs. The selection of an appropriate placement must take into account these four factors:

1. The content of the student’s IEP;
2. The LRE requirements;
3. The likelihood that the placement option will provide a reasonably high probability of assisting the student to attain her/his annual goals; and
4. Consideration of any potentially harmful effects that the placement option might have on a student or on the quality of services the student needs

Aspects of Service Delivery Model to be addressed in the Special Services Five-Year Action Plan

1. Co-teaching model at all secondary schools
2. 18-21 programs and services
3. Preschool center program at Old Redmond School House
4. Programs and services for twice exceptional students
5. Programs and services for dually qualified students (ELL and Special Education)
6. Choice school staffing processes

Timeline for Implementing Service Delivery Model Plan

Service Delivery Model	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Co-teaching model at all secondary schools		→	→	→	→
18-21 programs and services	→	→	→	→	
Preschool center program at Old Redmond School House	→	→	→	→	
Programs and services for twice exceptional students	→	→	→	→	
Programs and services for dually qualified students (ELL and Special Education)	→	→	→	→	
Choice school staffing and communication	→	→	→		

Curriculum, Assessment and Instructional Supports

Curriculum and Assessment Framework

The district's Curriculum and Assessment Framework defines curriculum as the work and learning of students. It involves instructional planning on the part of the teacher. It involves the use of effective instructional strategies with students and ongoing assessment of student learning. Curriculum provides students, teachers and parents with clear goals and targets for achievement. The work of teachers includes instructional planning and delivery, and assessment practices that will support students in their development and learning.

Planning for student success begins with a focus on student-centered classrooms. Teachers build unit and lesson plans incorporating a variety of assessments with student-centered learning as a foundation. Thinking skills and strategies are at the center of student learning.

Special Education teachers define a student's academic plan through the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process. The IEP stands as the student's curriculum. It should help guide learning experiences, instructional methodology and outcomes. Teams meet to develop Section 504 plans with the accommodations and modifications for a student with a disability that impacts one or more life functions, required to receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

Curriculum Adoption

Determining which curriculum will be taught to our students includes an adoption process. In this process:

- A diverse group of parents, community members, administrators, and teachers with subject matter expertise is formed
- Standards and interests are developed
- Screening criteria is created
- Available resources are reviewed
- Consensus and recommendation is made
- Public review is conducted
- Curriculum is approved by the Instructional Materials Committee and the Lake Washington School District Board of Directors

The committee members include representatives from Special Education teaching staff, Safety Net teaching staff, and Highly Capable teaching staff. They review the curriculum materials from an access and supplemental resource materials perspective relevant to each group.

Assessment

Research has shown that an aligned accountability system is a powerful force for improving student achievement.¹ Aligned accountability systems include content standards, performance standards, assessments and appropriate responses. While districts are accountable to states, according to the Center for Reform of School Systems, it is impossible for state accountability systems to reflect the priorities of each district. Local school districts tailor their own systems to meet their respective priorities and needs. They can more easily fine-tune or expand their systems to close loopholes,

¹ Urban School District Accountability Systems, Center for Reform of School Systems (CRSS) prepared this report as a subcontractor to the Education Commission of the States (ECS), was funded by the U.S. Department of Education. December 2003. Retrieved from http://www.ecs.org/html/educationissues/accountability/mcadams_report.pdf

measure achievement with additional assessments, change weights for accountability measures, or in other ways continuously improve.

LWSD has the goal to ensure academic success for every student. Academic success means students learn and master skills and concepts known as learning standards. Teachers align instruction and assessment to State of Washington learning standards. They monitor student growth and progress toward meeting standards through informal and formal assessments. Assessments help teachers, students and parents/guardians understand what concepts and skills students know and can do, and where students may need additional support to meet standards, and where students need additional challenge.

Information about student learning and the performance of the school district is gathered from a variety of sources. Those sources include national, state, district and classroom assessments.

Assistive Technology

According to the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, Assistive Technology increases a student's opportunities for education, social interactions and potential for meaningful employment. It also supports a student's participation in learning experiences in a least-restrictive environment. Assistive Technology is a tool to help students benefit from the General Education curriculum and access extracurricular activities in home, school and work environments.²

Access to Core Curriculum (As reported in UC Program Review Report)

A fundamental goal of the state and district English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics standards is creating a culture of high expectations for all students. In a statement on the application of the Common Core standards to students with disabilities, the Common Core website reinforces its inclusionary intent.

“Students with disabilities must be challenged to excel within the general curriculum and be prepared for success in their post-school lives, including college and/or careers. These common standards provide historic opportunity to improve access to rigorous academic content standards for students with disabilities.”³

The statement underscores the need for the supports and accommodations students with disabilities must have to meet high academic standards and fully demonstrate their knowledge and skills in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. These supports and accommodations should ensure students have full access to varying ways of learning and multiple opportunities to demonstrate knowledge. At the same time, they must retain the rigor and high expectations of the standards themselves.

Implementing the adopted state and district ELA and mathematics standards for students with disabilities includes the following elements:

- Instruction and related services designed to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities and enable them to access the General Education curriculum
- IEP annual goals aligned with and chosen to facilitate students' attainment of grade-level academic standards

² <http://nichcy.org/schoolage/iep/meetings/special-factors/considering-at>

³ Retrieved at <http://www.corestandards.org/assets/application-to-students-with-disabilities.pdf>.

- Teachers and specialized instructional support personnel who are prepared and qualified to deliver high-quality, evidence-based and individualized instruction and support services
- Instructional accommodations that reflect changes in materials (e.g., Assistive Technology) or procedures that do not change or dilute the standards but allow students to learn within the Common Core framework

Aspects of Curriculum, Assessment and Instructional Supports to be addressed in the Special Services Five-Year Action Plan:

1. Research Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)
2. Replacement materials aligned to core curriculum
3. Supplemental curriculum to support students diagnosed with Dyslexia
4. Systematic progress monitoring in ELA and Math
5. District-level data analysis efforts to monitor ongoing strengths and opportunities
6. Progress monitoring systems
7. Dyslexia evaluation screening tools

Assistive Technology

8. Staffing to support the district Assistive Technology program
9. Assistive Technology written guidance and procedures for staff and families

Timeline for Implementing Plan for Each Priority Area in Section:

Curriculum, Assessment and Instructional Supports/Assistive Technology	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Curriculum, Assessment, and Instructional Supports					
Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)	→	→	→	→	→
Replacement materials aligned to core curriculum	→	→	→	→	→
Supplemental curriculum to support students diagnosed with Dyslexia	→	→	→	→	
Systematic progress monitoring in ELA and Math	→	→	→	→	→
District-level data analysis efforts to monitor ongoing strengths and opportunities	→	→	→	→	
Progress monitoring systems	→	→	→	→	
Dyslexia evaluation screening tools	→	→	→	→	
Assistive Technology (AT)					
Staffing to support Assistive Technology program	→				
Assistive Technology guidance and procedures documents for staff and families	→	→			

Professional Development

Lake Washington School District is committed to staff professional learning to improve professional practice and student outcomes. The district offers professional development in a variety of ways by:

- collaborating with colleges and universities offering advanced degree programs;
- providing continuing education required for professional certification;
- providing new teacher induction and support; and,
- offering classes and trainings focused on all aspects of teaching and learning.

Aspects of Professional Development to be addressed in the Special Services Five-Year Action Plan:

1. Professional Development/Training of all special education staff regarding core, supplemental and replacement curriculum
2. Professional Development/Training for General Education teachers on differentiated instruction in literacy and math for qualified students
3. Professional Development/Training on best practices of qualification of dually qualified students
4. Guidance and training on models to enhance general education and special education teacher collaboration time
5. Professional Development/Training for 504 monitors
6. Training focused on policy updates (i.e., Dyslexia, Service Animals, Restraint or Isolation)

Timeline for Implementing Plan for Each Priority Area in Professional Development

Professional Development	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Professional Development/Training of all special education staff regarding core, supplemental and replacement curriculum	→	→	→		
Professional Development/Training for General Education teachers on differentiated instruction in literacy and math for qualified students	→		→	→	→
Professional Development/Training on best practices of qualification of dually qualified students		→	→	→	
Guidance and training on models to enhance general education and special education teacher collaboration time		→	→	→	→
Professional Development/Training for 504 monitors	→	→	→		
Training focused on policy updates (i.e. Dyslexia, Service Animals, Restraint or Isolation)	→				

Resources

LWSD annually engages internal and external stakeholders in a process to help inform budgetary decisions. The district evaluates expenditures, needs, and strategic efforts. It determines which areas to continue funding and where adjustments need to be made. It identifies where new investments can accomplish better outcomes for students.

The district uses public resources. It is accountable to its communities for the how these resources are spent. Efficient and effective use of resources is critical in achieving the district’s mission. Fiscal responsibility includes strategic use of resources to help meet goals by each division and department. The Special Services Department consistently uses federal and state funds with district levy funds to ensure students have the appropriate supports based on their individual needs as outlined in the students’ IEP or Section 504 Plans.

Aspects of Resources to be addressed in the Special Services Five-Year Action Plan:

1. Adjustments to staffing processes
2. Internal and external stakeholder communication with respect to resource allocations and expenditures

Timeline for Implementing Plan for Each Priority Area in Section:

Resources	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Adjustments to staffing processes	 				
Internal and external stakeholder communication with respect to resource allocations and expenditures	 				

Policy

LWSD’s policies are categorized into Governance and Administrative policy. Governance policies set the mission and “ends” or goals of organization. They define the structure of the relationships of the Board of Directors and the superintendent and specify limits on how the superintendent is to carry out the goals. The superintendent is charged with developing and implementing the Administrative policies. Those policies guide day-to-day administration and management of the district.

The district has adopted specific administrative policy and procedures to administer the Individuals with Disability Education Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Current administrative policy and procedures are policy IGB and procedure IGB-R. They are aligned and updated to current federal and state regulations. Updates to administrative policy occur when state or federal regulations change or are adopted and/or when improvements are needed to codify best practice.

The Special Services department also provides guidance for staff on processes, procedures, and required action that may not be specifically codified in Administrative Policy. Such guidance is often written so staff knows and understands the department expectations for them.

Aspects of Policy and Procedure to be addressed in the Special Services Five-Year Action Plan

1. Policy and Procedure language to address areas of need (i.e. Dyslexia, Service Animals, and Restraint or Isolation)
2. Response to Intervention (RTI) eligibility model for special education under Specific Learning Disability
3. Guidance documents for pre-referral options and supports for ELLs
4. Guidance documents for pre-referral options and supports for twice exceptional students
5. Section 504 policy and procedures to be separated from IGB-R to be a separate and distinct policy and procedures from the Special Education policy and procedures

Timeline for Implementing Plan for Each Priority Area in Policy:

Policy & Procedures	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Policy and Procedure language to address areas of need (i.e. Dyslexia, Service Animals, and Restraint or Isolation)	 				
Response to Intervention (RTI) eligibility model for special education under Specific Learning Disability					
Guidance documents for pre-referral options and supports for ELLs					
Guidance documents for pre-referral options and supports for twice exceptional students					
Section 504 policy and procedures to be separated from IGB-R to be a separate and distinct policy and procedures from the special education policies and procedures					

Interdepartmental Considerations

Collaboration across all divisions of a school district is essential to reach the district’s mission and vision. There are three divisions in LWSD: Student and School Support Services, Student and Professional Learning Services, and Operational Services. The divisions work in collaboration with each other to achieve the district’s strategic goals. The district believes that the organization must function collaboratively and interdependently in order to best serve schools, students, families and the community.

Aspects of Interdepartmental Considerations to be addressed in the Special Services Five-Year Action Plan:

1. Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)
2. System of collaboration with the transportation department
3. Collaboration with Accelerated programs to provide professional development on twice exceptional students and required supports
4. Collaboration with Intervention Services to provide professional development on dually qualified students
5. Leadership support in the implementation of inclusion practices for students with disabilities

Timeline for Implementing Plan for Each Priority Area in Section:

Interdepartmental Considerations	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)					
System of collaboration with the transportation department	 				
Collaboration with Accelerated programs to provide professional development on twice exceptional students and required supports					
Collaboration with Intervention Services to provide professional development on dually qualified students					
Leadership support in the implementation of inclusion practices for students with disabilities					

Parent & Family Engagement

One of the district’s four core values is *community connected*, and one of the district’s strategic goals is to *engage our communities*. Parent and family engagement and involvement are district priorities. Community engagement is critical to our district when making big decisions. Those decisions will be better and more effective if all who could be impacted have a voice in the decision-making process. The district values its relationships with parents and the community and believes these relationships are essential to the success of students.

The Urban Collaborative refers to the large body of research indicating the positive benefits of parent-professional collaboration on the education of students with disabilities.⁴ Effective collaborations are relationship-based. They acknowledge the power of combined expertise in meeting rigorous goals for students. Research suggests parent collaboration has been more difficult to achieve when:

- parents are new to this country,
- when language differences present barriers to communication, or
- when parents come from a background of poverty or low socioeconomic status and feel disenfranchised from the school.

Aspects of Parent and Family Engagement to be addressed in the Special Services Five-Year Action Plan:

1. Communication resources and tools for students, families, and staff
2. Parent engagement at the district level
3. Opportunities for feedback regarding Special Education and Section 504 programs and services for parents and families annually
4. Parent education resources and opportunities on an ongoing basis
5. Community partnerships

Timeline for Implementing Plan for Each Priority Area in Parent & Family Engagement

Parent & Family Engagement	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Communication resources and tools for students, families, and staff	→	→	→		
Parent engagement at the district level	→	→	→	→	
Opportunities for feedback regarding Special Education and Section 504 programs and services for parents and families annually	→	→	→		
Parent education resources and opportunities	→	→	→	→	
Community partnerships	→	→	→	→	→

Seven Priority Areas: Action Items

Service Delivery Models:

1. Co-teaching model at all secondary schools
2. Expand 18-21 programs and services
3. Preschool center program at Old Redmond School House
4. Programs and services for twice exceptional students
5. Programs and services for dually qualified students (ELL and Special Education)
6. Choice school staffing processes

Curriculum, Assessment, and Instructional Supports:

Curriculum, Assessment, and Instructional Supports

1. Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)
2. Curriculum replacement materials aligned to core curriculum
3. Supplemental curriculum to support students diagnosed with Dyslexia
4. Systematic progress monitoring in ELA and Math
5. Interdepartmental/district level data analysis efforts
6. Progress monitoring systems
7. Dyslexia evaluation screening tools

Assistive Technology

1. Staffing to support Assistive Technology program
2. Assistive Technology guidance and procedures documents for staff and families

Professional Development:

1. Professional Development/Training of all special education staff regarding core, supplemental and replacement curriculum
2. Professional Development/Training for General Education teachers on differentiated instruction in literacy and math for qualified students
3. Professional Development/Training on best practices of qualification of dually qualified students
4. Guidance and training on models to enhance general education and special education teacher collaboration time
5. Professional Development/Training for 504 monitors
6. Training focused on policy updates (i.e. Dyslexia, Service Animals, Restraint or Isolation)

Resources:

1. Adjustments to staffing processes
2. Internal and external stakeholder communication about resource allocations and expenditures

Policy and Procedures:

1. Policy and Procedure language to address areas of need (i.e. Dyslexia, Service Animals, and Restraint or Isolation)
2. Response to Intervention (RTI) eligibility model for special education under Specific Learning Disability
3. Guidance documents for pre-referral options and supports for ELLs
4. Guidance documents for pre-referral options and supports for twice exceptional students

Interdepartmental Considerations:

1. Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)
2. System of collaborate with the transportation department
3. Collaborate with Accelerated programs to provide professional development on twice exceptional students and required supports
4. Collaborate with Intervention Services to provide professional development on dually qualified students
5. Leadership support in the implementation of inclusion practices for students with disabilities

Parent and Family Engagement:

1. Publish communication resources and tools for students, families, and staff
2. Increase parent engagement at the district level
3. Survey and provide venues for feedback regarding Special Education and Section 504 programs and services for parents and families annually
4. Parent education resources and opportunities on an ongoing basis
5. Increase community partnerships