

Education, Equity, and Excellence Committee

Special Education Report

February 3, 2011

SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT VISION:

EMPOWER ADVOCATE ACHIEVE

Through collaborative partnerships with students, families, and the community, Unit #4 Special Education will maximize achievement for all students. We will empower, advocate, and actively promote an inclusive school environment that advances academic excellence and positive social-emotional development. We will meet the needs of our diverse student population by continuing to use research-based interventions and best practice.

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN UNIT #4

The Champaign Unit #4 School District offers a comprehensive special education program for children between the ages of 3 and 21. Unit #4 strives to provide the least restrictive special education environment in order for children to develop to their maximum potential. Parents are an integral part of the school team. Unit #4 Special Education Department provides supports and services to over 1400 students with disabilities so that they can derive educational benefit from the curriculum and make continuous progress toward meeting curricular goals and State Standards.

The Special Education Department exists to provide services to students who need modifications, supports and accommodations beyond what can be provided by the classroom teacher, to derive benefit from the Unit #4 Curriculum. Although special education is often viewed as a legalistic, complex and bureaucratic process, it is first and foremost about children. Access to the services can appear to be complicated by the system set up by the federal and state laws and guidelines; it is primarily in place to ensure that services will be available to enable all students to make progress toward meeting state and local standards. Unit #4 is committed to providing quality programs for all students.

DISABILITY AREAS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION IN ILLINOIS

Cognitive Disability

Multiple Disability

Emotional Disability

Specific Learning Disability

Autism

Hearing Impairment including Deafness

Vision Impairment including Blindness

Speech-Language Impairment

Traumatic Brain Injury

Other Health Impairment

Orthopedic Impairment

Developmental Delay

*For a complete description and eligibility criteria of all the disability areas you may contact the home school building, this office, or view the Eligibility Criteria link on the Special Education website.

STUDENT SERVICES AND SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

The Early Childhood Program provides specialized instruction and support services for 3-5 year old children who have speech and language delays, developmental delays or other areas of delay. Programs address individual needs and foster independence.

The Resource Program is designed for students whose needs can be met in a general education classroom for at least 50% of the school day. This program can include consultation with the general classroom teacher by a special educator, individual or small-group instruction, and/or support services delivered within the general education classroom.

Instructional Classes are designed for students whose needs are met in a small class setting more than half the school day. There are several times of instructional classes that have a particular curricular emphasis which meets the

needs of the students in that class. The types of classes offered may be adjusted based on the needs of the students each year.

Speech Language services are provided to children who exhibit significant communication difficulties. The communication areas may include receptive and/or expressive language, articulation, fluency, and/or voice.

Examples of other services provided include Vision and Hearing Itinerant Services, Orientation and Mobility Services, Physical and Occupational Therapy, Autism Team, Vocational training, and School Social Work Services.

Making a Referral for Special Education: Case Study Evaluation

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION

Response to Intervention (RtI) is utilized to evaluate a student's response to an intervention and involves the practices of providing high quality instruction and intervention match to student need, monitoring progress to identify learning rate over time and applying student response data to make important education decisions (NADSE, 2006).

In the past, students not meeting classroom expectations were oftentimes referred for "testing" and exposed to an abundance of tests. If the student met specific criteria, they received a "label" (e.g. learning disability) and place in special education. Unfortunately, this method neglects to examine critical factors that impact student learning (e.g. curriculum, instruction, and environment). Most important, this traditional method does not emphasize prevention and early intervention as students have to wait until achievement gap is large enough before they receive extra support.

The benefits to Response to Intervention (RtI) include:

- Data-based decisions
- Early intervention and prevention
- Parent involvement
- Outcomes oriented focused on student progress

- Increase in general education options
- Layering supports
 - ✓ Quality core instruction (Tier 1) ensures grade-level achievement for 80% of students
 - ✓ Quality Tier 2 research-based interventions are implemented as part of the general education curriculum
 - ✓ Quality Tier 3 research-based interventions and supports are implemented for students eligible for special education services

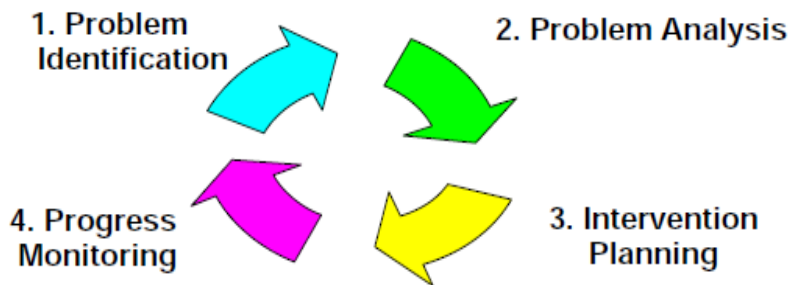
Problem Solving Process

Problem solving is a collaborative model implemented by school staff to systematically identify and analyze student needs, set measurable goals, and finally develop and monitor interventions supported by research. All of these tasks allow educators to make on-going instructional decisions based upon data, which greatly increases the likelihood a student will positively benefit from an educational intervention. Problem solving is also referred to as Response to Intervention and is a major initiative in the state of Illinois.

The problem solving method is used to match instructional resources to educational need. The problem-solving method is as follows:

- (a) Define the problem by determining the discrepancy between what is expected and what is occurring.
- (b) Analyze the problem using data to determine why the discrepancy is occurring.
- (c) Establish a student performance goal, develop an intervention plan to address the goal and delineate how the student's progress will be monitored and implementation integrity will be ensured.
- (d) Use progress monitoring data to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention plan.

Steps of Problem Solving



Adapted from *Response to Intervention: Policy Considerations and Implementation* (Batsche, et al. 2005). http://www.isbe.net/pdf/rti_state_plan.pdf

BUILDING INTERVENTION TEAMS (BIT)

A problem solving team designed to increase student achievement and/or improve behavior via research based interventions and data-driven decision making.

BIT teams are in place in all Unit 4 schools. The primary function of the team is to provide support in the form of intervention ideas, strategies, and resources to teachers who refer students experiencing some type of difficulty in the school setting. The critical goal is to find the best combination of methods, materials, and strategies to assist the student. Areas of difficulty vary; they may include, but are not limited to, academic concerns, social-emotional concerns, language/communication concerns, health concerns, attention concerns, and motor concerns. BIT teams are also used to respond to a parent request for a 504 Plan or a referral for a full and individual evaluation. BIT team members typically include a building administrator, a school psychologist, a school social worker, a special educator, and general education teachers

When a request for a full and individual evaluation is made, it should be given to the building principal where the student attends school or would attend school if enrolled. If such a request is given to an employee of the district, the employee will immediately give the referral to the building principal.

Any staff person, parent/guardian, or agency may refer a student for a special education case study evaluation to determine if special education is appropriate.

A BIT meeting will be scheduled at the building. Building Intervention Teams meet regularly to discuss students and review concerns and data.

Domain Review Meeting

The Domain Review Meeting is the setting where a team of staff members and the parent determine what type of evaluation may be necessary to get a full view of the student, educationally.

Giving Consent

Parent signature of consent to evaluate, or agreement that no further information is necessary, begins the sixty day timeline to complete the case study evaluation. Please note that this means 60 school days.

Eligibility Staffing

The Eligibility Determination Conference (EDC)

At most Eligibility Determination Conferences, a psychologist, social worker, general education teacher, special education teacher, and a building administrator will be present. For students who had evaluations completed for speech and language, a speech language pathologist will be present.

After the professionals have completed the reporting of the evaluations, eligibility will be determined per the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and Unit #4 Eligibility Criteria Guidelines. A discussion will occur regarding the way in which the disabling conditions affect the student's ability to learn (adverse effects). Additionally, a discussion and documentation of the child's unique educational needs will take place.

Following this discussion, if a child is found eligible for services and an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is written, parents will be asked to sign consent for the student to receive the services recommended.

Individual Education Plans (IEP)

The Individual Education Plan (IEP)

The IEP document is to be developed by a team of persons, including the parent or guardian, who has knowledge about the child educationally. The team should consist of a general education teacher, special education teacher, the parent, a school administrator, and other personnel having knowledge or dealings with the child, relevant to the educational process.

Goals and Benchmarks

The Individualized Educational Program includes goals and benchmarks to elicit desired progress. The goals are written for long-term use, to be completed within a year's time, and to be reviewed, at a minimum, annually at the student's Annual Review. The benchmarks are small steps leading to the completion of the long term goal.

Educational Placement

Placement in the Least Restrictive Environment occurs near the end of the IEP meeting, once all of the information available on the student has been provided. The team, including the parent, then reviews the student's educational needs and chooses the placement in which those needs can best be met.

Related Services are also discussed at this time and may include speech services, social work services, occupational or physical therapy services, and transportation.

SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Total Certified Special Education Staff: 193

This includes: Special Education Teachers, School Psychologists, School Social Workers, Speech and Language Therapist, and Occupational and Physical Therapists to cover all campuses in Unit #4. The Department also has an District Autism team established to support students with Autism.

Total Special Education Teacher Assistants: 139

The Special Education Department certified staff make up 23% of the Unit #4 certified staff population.

SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLLMENT

December 1st Counts as Reported to ISBE:

2008-09 1814 Active Students with IEPs (18.2% of Unit #4 enrollment are students with IEPs)
2009-10 1679 Active Students with IEPs (18% of Unit #4 enrollment are students with IEPs)
Dec 2010 1489 Active Students with IEPs (16% of Unit #4 enrollment are students with IEPs)

36% of students with disabilities are identified as having a primary disability of Specific Learning Disability.

22% of students with disabilities are identified as having a primary disability of Speech Language Impairment.

10% of students with disabilities are identified as having a primary disability of Emotional Disability.

9% of students with disabilities are identified as having a primary disability of Cognitive Impairment.

FUNDING SOURCES:

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B Flow Through and Preschool Grant, Medicaid Reimbursement, and District funds.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- ***There were no findings from the Illinois State Board of Education in the area of Disproportionality for Champaign Unit #4.***

- ***Buildings continue to utilize Special Education Acceleration Team (SEAT) meetings and Acceleration Monitoring of Progress (AMP) completed for ALL student receiving special education services.***

- ***Professional Development in the area of Inclusion and Co-teaching for targeted general education teachers, special education teachers, administrators from each campus.***
 - Dr. Deborah Harris has consulted with Unit #4 for the past two years. She works with teachers on revitalizing instruction for special education through inclusion and co-teaching. Special Education students receive their instruction and

services in a general education setting with general education curriculum. Instruction is designed to meet student's needs. This service delivery model is not "new" to Unit #4; however we have focused professional development for our teachers and are refining the instruction to meet the needs of all learners.

- Each year (2009-10 and 2010-11) in the fall and then in the spring semesters, 26 general and special education teachers that co-teach (2 certified teachers in a classroom) subjects are provided a five-day training.
- Each year administrators attend training and updates on inclusionary practices.
- This year 1-4 teacher aides from each campus attended a 1-day training.
- Ongoing support to teachers through Technical Assistance (observation, feedback, collaboration, and problem solving discussions)
- Two days prior to school starting the District offered collaboration time to teachers to prepare for the instructional needs of their students and to begin training of new teachers to the co-teaching model.
- Parent Inclusion Network is fully functioning. Parents of students with disabilities and community advocates meet with the District staff monthly to openly discuss concerns.

The Data

BUILDING INTERVENTION TEAMS (BIT)

Through first semester:

	2008-09 Total # of students taken to BIT	2009-10 Total # of students taken to BIT	2010-11 Total # of students taken to BIT	2008-09 % of total referred for Case Study Evaluation (sped eligibility)	2009-10 % of total referred for Case Study Evaluation (sped eligibility)	2010-11 % of total referred for Case Study Evaluation (sped eligibility)
Elementary	-	208	118	-	25% (N=53)	23%(N=27)*
Middle	-	35	30	-	9% (N=3)	0%

High School	-	42	30	-	12% (N=5)	3% (N=1)
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Through End of School Year:

	2008-09 Total # of students taken to BIT	2009-10 Total # of students taken to BIT	2010 Total # of students taken to BIT	2008-09 % of total referred for Case Study Evaluation (sped eligibility)	2009-10 % of total referred for Case Study Evaluation (sped eligibility)	2010 % of total referred for Case Study Evaluation (sped eligibility)
Elementary	489	436	-	20% (N=98)	20% (N=89)	-
Middle	82	76	-	5% (N=4)	16% (N=12)	-
High School	85	89	-	7%(N=6)	15% (N=13)	-

END OF YEAR (EOY) SPECIAL EDUCATION ELIGIBILITY

	2008-09 Total # of students initial eligibility	2009-10 Total # of students initial eligibility	2010-11 Total # of students initial eligibility	2008-09 Number that did not qualify	2009-10 Number that did not qualify	2010-11 Number that did not qualify
Elementary	60	89	-	25	9	-
Middle	1	12	-	3	4	-
High School	4	13* all CE	-	1	0	-

*Through the first semester: 19 of the 21 evaluations are not completed due to 60 school day timelines from date of consent for evaluation.

~Elementary 1 student found eligible in the area of Specific Learning Disability

~High School 1 student found eligible in the area of Emotional Disability (ED).

END OF YEAR (EOY) SPECIAL EDUCATION DISMISSAL/EXIT DATA

District Totals	Dismissed/Exit	Speech Language Impairment Only	Specific Learning Disability	Emotional Disability
2008-09	536	187	219	77
2009-10	312	100	92	64
2010-11	--	--	--	--

**Through the first semester 2010-11: 130 students have been dismissed/exited special education.*

*42 were students identified with speech language impairment
 25 returned to general education full-time
 15 moved out of district
 1 placed in rehabilitation, mental health, etc
 1 revocation of consent for special education*

*40 were students identified with a specific learning disability
 24 moved out of district
 15 returned to general education full-time
 1 placed in rehabilitation, mental health, etc*

*24 were student identified with emotional disability
 12 moved out of district
 6 were placed in rehabilitation, mental health, etc
 5 returned to general education full-time
 1 graduated with a diploma*

2010 EOY data Referrals for Specific Learning Disability Eligibility @ Elementary

				TOTAL 41
Specific	White (1)	FRL Male	6	11
		Male	5	

Learning Disability (D)		FRL Female	1	4
		Female	3	
	African American (2)	FRL Male	16	18
		Male	2	
		FRL Female	7	
		Female	1	
			8	

37% of the referrals were for White students

63% of the referrals were for African-American students

73% of the referrals were for students on Free-Reduced Lunch

56% of the referrals were for African-American students on Free-Reduced Lunch