



A Community of Learners

Informational Memo - Special Education Annual Goal Year One Update

TO: School Board
Superintendent Kocanda

FROM: Beth Martin

June 7, 2017

Background

One of the District's Strategic Plan goals for this school year is entitled Reaching All Learners. A specific focus within this goal is: Establish a District-wide Special Education service delivery model. This memo is designed to update the Board on work that has been completed during the first year of this two-year goal.

Alignment with the District 36 Shared Vision

Our special education department provides a variety of services to students who have been identified as requiring specialized support. Our work aligns with the District 36 Shared Vision in multiple ways.

- Special education services include specific instruction that supports students who may demonstrate deficits in their learning or social and emotional profiles, and challenges students to function at their full potential.
- Provision of specific instruction, accommodations and curricular modifications enables each student to demonstrate individual growth and to achieve a level of success.
- Through provision of proper levels of support and opportunity for students to meet challenges successfully, students are able to engage in their learning, demonstrate independence, and better prepare for their future.

Overview

We have completed year one of reviewing the continuum of special education services. This year, most emphasis has been placed on engaging all stakeholders as a means to ascertain where we can refine and improve our practices, improving our transition processes, and establishing entrance and exit criteria for SOAR services.

Stakeholders who have participated in the continuum review include building principals, building department chairs or coordinators, special education staff members, Department of Student Services (DSS) committee members and parents. In November and December 2016, five parent forums were held as a means to gather input from parents through completion of a SWOT analysis. A summary of information was shared with the Board in January (available [here](#)).

Year One Program Review Outcomes

- The District currently offers a broad range of special education services.
- Similar delivery models are in place at each of the elementary schools.
 - Associate support in general education
 - Special Education instruction within general education classrooms
 - Special Education instruction outside of general education
- Co-teaching models are utilized in the middle schools.
- Program level support is offered at the middle schools when warranted (SOAR resources and Replacement Curriculum)
- Skokie School has reviewed service delivery within the building and is implementing new practices for next year by aligning special education teachers with general education teams. This includes more inclusive practices for students.
- Specific entrance and exit criteria for SOAR resources was developed and implemented.
- Skokie School is incorporating all social and emotional resources (formerly SOAR) into their building continuum of services (for 2017-2018).
- School teams are utilizing data to drive decision making regarding what special education services are indicated for each student.
- Interventions offered to students are targeted and based on deficits identified in assessment and progress monitoring.
- Transition process from 4th to 5th grade, and from 6th to 7th grade, have been refined.

Identified Needs from Year One Review

As a result of the work completed this school year, the following has been identified as areas where additional focus will be appropriate for year two of the continuum review.

- Review multi-sensory reading interventions and refine how these interventions will be delivered.
- Increase parent communication inclusive of reporting on progress more regularly than only at trimester.
- Establish entrance and exit guidelines for when special education services will be offered within general education or outside of general education.
- Through assessment and progress monitoring, identify what special education services are effective to build student independence and provide services accordingly.

Targeted Year Two Products

Outcomes from year one work and identified needs from this work will be incorporated as the continuum review continues this next school year. Below are targeted products for year two of this review.

- Promote ongoing involvement of parents through additional parent forums.
- Refine programs and services to ascertain that the needs of each student are being addressed in the most appropriate and least restrictive setting.
- Establish guidelines for when special education services will be inclusive and when services will be outside of the general education setting.
- Develop program descriptions that will help to outline and highlight services offered within the continuum.
- Establish guidelines that will aid in determining when available District-based services may be insufficient for some of our students (outplacements)
- Explore available programs/placements that are out of District and expand the continuum to include these programs
 - Specialized placement alternatives within NSSED
 - Private Placements (when warranted)
- Collaborate with NSSED to broaden coaching services and supports that are offered to staff and students.
- Construct common language and program definitions as a means to provide continuity to parents when describing the services offered to students within District
- Develop a visual reference (flow chart) that will incorporate program definitions

Next Steps

The table below reflects targeted timelines for opportunities through January, 2018, at which time an update will be provided to the School Board. It is anticipated that the full continuum of service review will be completed by May, 2018.

July, August 2017	Summer work/training: coaching models, inclusion services, intervention tools, IEP systems, transition checklists
July, August, 2017	Outline/plan PD for Staff: SEL supports within the classroom setting; Goal Writing and service delivery that supports inclusion/LRE.
September, 2017	DSS Release Day
September, 2017	Meet with principals and special education coordinators to review continuum modifications and progress with inclusion based services.
October, 2017	Schedule parent forums - round 2 - targeted on communication and data sharing.
October, 2017	Connect with general education staff and special education staff regarding progress with inclusion-based services.
November, 2017	DSS Committee Work - Institute Day
December, 2017	Develop draft visual reference flow chart
January, 2018	Board Update