



Informational Memo: Special Education Annual Goals

TO: School Board
Superintendent Kocanda

FROM: Beth Martin

October 18, 2016

Background

One of the District's Strategic Plan goals for this school year is entitled Reaching All Learners. A specific part of this goal area is to address our special education continuum of services. This memo is designed to outline the goals that have been established within the Department of Student Services (DSS) as a means to establish a district-wide continuum of services to our students.

Alignment with the District 36 Shared Vision

Our special education department is designed to provide 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.

- Provision of specific instruction, accommodations and curricular modifications that enable each student to reach a level of success.
- Specialized instruction enables staff to support each student to the level required, and to also challenge each student to function as independently as possible.
- Focusing on a student's individual goals enables each student to demonstrate growth over time. This growth often equates to a student's ability to achieve his or her classroom goals.
- Individualized plans that emphasize targeted goal areas allow for students to demonstrate personal growth and to establish skills that will enable them to be successful as students, today, and as adults in the future.

Overview

The process of establishing a District wide continuum of service has been initiated by gathering information across all five school buildings. Meetings have occurred with each building principal, building department chairs or coordinators, and with special education staff members from each building who also are members of the Department of Student Services Committee.

To date, information collected from each school has included the following:

- What special education services are currently offered?
- What works well within your building?
- What is in need of modification?
- What would you like to see added to your program within your school?
- What roadblocks do you face regularly regarding service delivery?
- Of all that you offer, what do you feel you do best?

By answering these questions, initial analysis of the programs and services that are currently offered has begun. More in depth conversations regarding overall program effectiveness will occur at an upcoming teacher institute day with members of the Department of Student Services (DSS) committee. This information will then be shared with principals and special education department chairs/coordinators as a means to establish a meaningful overview of current program effectiveness.

Targeted Year One Products

As current program analysis is completed, the following will also occur.

- Schedule a forum(s) for parents which will allow parents to share their feedback and/or concerns about service delivery (November, 2016).
- Ascertain where special education programs and services are aligned across the District. (November, 2016)
 - What overlaps exist?
 - What gaps, if any, are evident?
- Determine if utilization of staff and available space is effective. (November-December, 2016)
- Establish what programs and services will continue (January-February, 2017)
- Evaluate which programs or service models may require modification

(January-February, 2017)

- Explore what programs or services may be established or re-established, and in what school year this may be appropriate (February-March, 2017)
- Construct common language and program definitions as a means to provide continuity to parents when describing the services offered to students within District (March-April, 2017)
- Develop a visual representation (flow chart) as a reference tool for parents (May, 2017)

Anticipated Year Two Products

Much of what is initiated this school year will continue into the 2017-2018 school year. As modifications to programs and services are considered and implemented, evaluation of these modifications will also occur as a means to measure program effectiveness. A targeted calendar for year two products will be developed at the end of this school year. Year two products will include:

- Promote ongoing involvement of parents through parent forums.
- Refine programs and services to ascertain that the needs of each student are being addressed.
- Establish program definitions for any new programs and refine definitions for existing programs if warranted.
- Expand the overall continuum to include programs and services that are offered out-of-District
 - Specialized placement alternatives within NSSSED
 - Private Placements (when warranted)
- Collaborate with NSSSED to broaden coaching services and supports that are offered to students.
- Update/refine visual reference (flow chart)

Throughout the two year cycle, ongoing interaction with administration, staff and parents will promote a consistent flow of feedback and enable the focus of the work to remain on what is best for students.

Next Steps

Throughout the school year, meetings with the DSS committee, building principals, special education department chairs/coordinators and parents will enable completion of the work targeted in the products listed above. The table below reflects targeted timelines for these opportunities through February, 2017, at which time an update will be provided to the School Board.

October, 2016	Establish calendar for Parent forum(s)
November, 2016	DSS Committee Work - Institute Day
November, 2016	Meet with principals and special education coordinators
December, 2016	DSS Committee Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review targeted products• Adjust calendar if warranted
January, 2017	Meet with principals and special education coordinators
February, 2017	DSS Committee Work - Institute Day
February, 2017	Board Update regarding products to date