

To: Members of the Board of Education
From: Dr. Laurie Heinz, Superintendent
Mike Padavic, Interim Director of Student Services
Date: March 12, 2018
Re: Special Education Audit

Mr. Padavic and I have interviewed external auditors in an effort to identify a firm able to conduct a comprehensive special education audit in District 64. The audit is intended to provide a “baseline” of the current operations of special education functions within District 64’s Student Services Department, with the goal of identifying areas of strength as well as opportunities for improvement going forward.

We have entered into an agreement with Lisa Harrod of LMT Consulting to conduct the District 64 Audit. What resonated most with us about the LMT Consulting audit process is the ability for them to customize the components within the audit to meet our needs; the way in which they interview stakeholders; the survey process that allows stakeholders that cannot participate in focus groups to contribute their thoughts; and their understanding of the power of the co-teaching model as well as their inclusive classroom mindset.

We are working with Mrs. Harrod to create a viable timeline that will allow active and in-depth participation of general as well as special education teachers; building and central office administration; parents; and Board members. Factoring in spring break, the anticipated timeline is for LMT to be in-District beginning in April. LMT Consulting will be introduced to special education parents at the previously scheduled D64 Special Education Parent Support Group meeting on Wednesday, April 11. We are targeting a findings report to the Board at the May 21, 2018 regular Board meeting.

As part of its audit, LMT Consulting is expected to delve into many areas, such as:

Parent and Staff Outreach

- LMT Consulting will facilitate structured interviews for both parents and staff during on-site visits and provide a report outlining information shared by participants that highlights strengths and areas of focus.
- All special education parents will have an opportunity to complete a parent survey.

- Staff will be surveyed around topics such as curriculum, programs, delivery model, professional development delivered and still needed, and accolades as well as climate within the department.
- Data from these surveys will be compiled into a Findings Report.

Materials Review

- Review the availability of intervention programs to ensure staff have a variety of options to address student needs.
- Review instructional classroom curricular materials and make suggestions for potential supplemental resources.
- Ascertain whether appropriate professional development regarding materials has been provided to support implementation.

Continuum of Services and Process Review

- Review District 64's Continuum of Services as related to placement of students in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).
- Review organization of instructional program across the District.
- Review the Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) process and paperwork.
- Review social emotional supports available at all three tiers and how needs are addressed/supported through the MTSS process.
- Review effectiveness of writing and implementing appropriate functional behavior assessments (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP).
- Review the pre-referral process and steps leading to special education eligibility.
- Review a sampling of IEP files at all buildings to ensure compliance and determine if additional staff training is needed.
- Review a sampling of files to ensure goals and objectives are legally defensible.
- Review related services (such as speech/language, occupational therapy) practices and service delivery.
- Review IEP meeting logistics and roles of parents and team members in the process.

Professional Development

- Evaluate professional development needs and future offerings, as well as trainings staff have already engaged in.
- Engage staff in discussion on "Big Ideas" for the Department moving forward.
- Review the District's co-teaching design and discussion of suggested improvements for sustainability.
- Review PT3 outcomes related to vision and mission for the Department aligned to the existing vision and mission statement for District 64 -- *Inspire every child to discover, learn, achieve and care.*