

To: Board of Education
Dr. Laurie Heinz, Superintendent
From: Dr. Lea Anne Frost, Director of Student Services
Date: December 10, 2018
Re: Special Education Update November to December

The Student Services Department is continuing to progress on the identified four key target areas that align to both the external audit and internal review.

Activities between November 13, 2018 and December 10, 2018

The sections below describe the activities that have occurred within the Department of Student Services following the Board's regular November meeting through December 10, 2018 in support of the multi-year improvement effort that aligns with the D64 *2020 Vision* Strategic Plan.

Staffing

On November 1, 2018 the department released the Staff Needs Assessment survey via email to all D64 staff. The survey closed on November 16, 2018 of which 131 responses were gathered yielding a 20.1% response rate. The data from this survey needs to be coded and analyzed before determining next steps.

At this time, administration is making a request to hire a .5 special education coordinator to assist in the support of change efforts within the District for the rest of the school year. Currently both Dr. Frost and Ms. Waughon have student caseloads, thereby inhibiting their availability to assist other administrators and staff with coordination and implementation.

Ongoing Professional Development Needs

During this past month the following professional development activities occurred:

- Nicolette Solano, our Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), provided training to all special education elementary staff including a large number of teacher assistants on behavior management on November 14. On another note, Ms. Solano is supervising a staff member at Roosevelt School who is engaging in a practicum to be a BCBA.
- We have replenished the number of Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) trainers we have on staff. These trainers consist of: a special education coordinator, speech and language therapist, psychologist, and our BCBA. These individuals are providing full trainings to staff. We hope to increase the number of CPI trainers for next year.
- D64 hosted an Illinois Alliance of Administrators for Special Education (IAASE) training on November 16 with the topic of *Effective Parent Communication*, which Dr. Frost and

Ms. Waughon attended.

- All certified staff will participate in *Facilitated IEP* training (January 23 and 24). Pre-registration for this training has been offered to PT3 and the Special Education Board Committee members. Registration information will be sent to District parents on December 17, 2018. Each training holds a maximum of 50 participants.

Consistency

The Student Services department is continuing to address the development of comprehensive procedures:

- The Social Workers are continuing to align the Student Suicide and Homicide Threat Assessments/Procedures with the Board procedures.
- Assistant Principals, Psychologists, Physical Therapists and Special Education Coordinators are working to develop a procedural manual for 504 eligibility and services.
- Recommendations from the Student Services department has been provided in regards to the policies and procedures samples within the most current PRESS update.
- While the transition process from Early Childhood to Kindergarten seems to be established, we are continuing to solidify the 5th to 6th grade and 8th grade to high school transition process. We have worked with D207 in making record-sharing more efficient by using the Embrace IEP system that both districts utilize. Transitions from outplacements back to District are determined on an individual basis and are discussed through the IEP process.
- The Assistant Superintendent for Student Learning and Director and Assistant Director for Student Services are engaging in planning for Extended School Year (ESY) programming for summer 2019.

To date, D64 has finalized the following items that enhance the key target of consistency:

- The utilization of 6:120 AP2 (Access to Classroom and Personnel).
- An IEP Verification form to ensure all general education staff and teacher assistants who have contact with students with IEPs are aware of the student's needs, accommodations, and modifications.
- A referral process for the services of the Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA).
- Procedures for determining homelessness and the updating of the website for appropriate and meaningful materials to families.
- Accommodations Checklist added to the Embrace 504 system.
- Appropriate and acceptable modifications and accommodations that are being used in formative and common assessments.
- The finalization of private evaluations to D64 and Home/Hospital Procedures.
- As a means to foster communication, the Student Services staff portal contains finalized procedures and materials from trainings.

- As a follow up to the showing of the documentary film, *Angst*, the Student Services department added a new webpage, called [Health & Wellness Resources](#). This webpage now offers a wide variety of community resources in Park Ridge and Niles that are available to all families who may be experiencing mental health or other concerns for their students or family members. The webpage was shared with all the school websites as well, making it a consistent, ongoing resource throughout D64. It was also featured in a recent eNews newsletter.

Other activities have included:

- Reviews of: individual student evacuation plans and walk-throughs of those buildings to ensure appropriate accessibility; the domain meeting procedures to ensure parent input; the legal use of special education staff for the Multi Tier System of Supports (MTSS); and student records locations and items housed within the various files.
- Conversion of use to the documents supplied by Embrace, our IEP system, including the use of eligibility determination and FBA/BIP documents and updating the system with each parent/guardian's residence.
- Creation of a new newsletter -- "*Snapshots from Student Services*" -- now being shared bi-weekly with all department staff and D64 administrators. This is increasing communication among the special education staff and administration on a District-wide basis.

Message of Inclusion

Various activities are being addressed to continue and support the "Message of Inclusion":

- The Special Education Board Committee met on November 13 and is scheduled to meet next on December 19.
- The Parents and Teachers Talking Together (PT3) group has scheduled 3 meetings through February:
 - December 11, January 29, and February 26
- An administrative group continues to develop a Disability Awareness Curriculum by month to be shared with each school (also pertains to Key Target #3).
- The Special Olympics planning team is continuing to make arrangements District-wide for student participation.
- Last month we reported that two additional students were transitioning from outplacements back to D64 noting 6 students in total since October. Unfortunately, one student was unable to make the start of the transition process successfully; 5 students are in the back-to-District transition process.
- The Director and Assistant Director continue to meet with teams and related services groups.

Year to Date Review

The following information aligns the collaborative audit findings from the internal and external reports from spring of 2018 with the activities that have been conducted thus far this year.

Audit Finding 1: Strong, systemic professional development opportunities need to be provided throughout the buildings and district to all staff (i.e. co-teaching, restorative justice, facilitated IEP, goal writing, diversity/disability awareness training, mentoring).

To date, D64 has:

- Held 23 professional development trainings for staff
- Held 1 professional development training for parents
- Scheduled 1 upcoming professional development training for parents
- Encouraged collaboration across disciplines

Audit Finding 2: Special Education Administrators need to become visible, accessible, and instructional leaders.

To date, the Director and Assistant Director of Student Services have:

- Been actively involved in 504 and IEP meetings
- Continued to meet with teams and related services groups
- Visited schools and classrooms

D64 has:

- Hired an additional sped coordinator

Audit Finding 3: On-going vertical articulation needs to occur; consider the creation of a newsletter and other communication systems including regularly scheduled meetings.

To date, D64 has:

- Instituted various communication practices (websites, emails, meetings, staff newsletter, etc.) for staff and parents
- Reviewed and memorialized policies, procedures, and practices for implementation
- Increased its use of Embrace for state documents and data reporting

Audit Finding 4: Systems (504, MTSS, a continuum of services, and academic and behavioral curriculum/methodologies/interventions/assessment) need to be reviewed, detailed, developed and communicated; these systems need to be implemented consistently and with fidelity.

To date, D64 has:

- Begun construction of a 504 manual
- Collected information on current curriculum programs, tools, and assessments - currently we are piloting 5 curricular programs
- Discussed and begun developing procedures for maintaining school records

- Begun ESY planning

Audit Finding 6: Transition process for students need to be defined.

To date, D64 has:

- Determined a need to establish beginning of the year “meet and greets” for students
- Developed EC to K transition plans
- Begun development of 5th to 6th grade transition plans
- Instituted more efficient measures to communicate with District 207 regarding 9th grade transitions
- Discussed expectations for students from outplacements returning to D64

Audit Finding 7: Co-taught classrooms need to have defined expectations and goals.

To date, D64 has offered two, 2-part trainings to teachers in co-teaching environments

Audit Finding 8: Establish programs for inclusion of students (peer buddy, Special Olympics, disability/diversity awareness, etc.).

To date, D64 has:

- Begun developing a disability awareness curriculum
- Begun planning for a District-wide Special Olympics team

Audit Finding 9: Engage parents to gain their perspectives, create communication tools and develop resources for parents (i.e. parent universities, PT3, annual parent survey, PTO, handbook, website resources, etc.).

To date, D64 has:

- Updated the resources and information for parents on the Student Services webpage
- Held 3 PT3 group meetings
- Held 2 SPED Board Committee meetings

Audit Finding 10: Secure additional staff to provide additional programming options (BCBA, psychologist, social worker, dean, and special education administrators).

To date, D64 has:

- Hired additional special education staff
- Completed the Staff Needs Assessment Survey

Audit Finding 11: Create a path for change that does not have competing reform efforts.

To date:

- All special education coordinators have common goals for evaluation purposes
- All activities previously listed in all audit findings promote this outcome

Future Plans for the Key Targets for the 2018-19 School Year

1. Staffing
 - a. An analysis of the special education needs assessment survey responses
 - b. The projection (staffing and budget) process will be established
2. Professional Development
 - a. Continued training on specific topics to staff
 - b. A professional development needs assessment will be sent to all staff in March/April
3. Consistency
 - a. The development of the 504 and MTSS manual
 - b. Defining the special education curriculum programs, tools, and materials essential to reading math, and social-emotional learning
4. Message of Inclusion
 - a. The continuation of the PT3 and SPED Board Committee work
 - b. Implementation of a Disability Awareness curriculum
 - c. Formation of a District-wide Special Olympics team

I look forward to presenting the department's update and sharing priority projects with members of the Board at the December 10, 2018 regular meeting.