SPECIAL EDUCATION

Strategic Plan

The priorities, goals, strategies, and action steps that compose a high quality, student-centered program for students with special needs



The Special Education Strategic Plan is the result of the Special Education Taskforce. The Taskforce was comprised of representatives from all stakeholder groups including students, parents, teachers, administrators and staff. Taskforce members participated in a series of collaboration sessions that spanned one year; investing over 20 hours of teamwork. During each session, members discussed the current status of programs in the district, researched exemplary programs in the state and nation, and designed a plan for improving support for students.

Program Priorities

1. **Intervention and Identification**
2. **Service Delivery Model**
3. **Support Systems**
4. **Leadership and Communication**
5. **Monitoring and Compliance**



Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of the Strategic Plan is to define the structure of programs for students with special needs in order that they may access standards-aligned content, high quality learning environments, individualized support and resources in the least restrictive environment with priority placed on integration with general education peers. The Strategic Plan is organized around five priorities that compose the backbone of a highly effective special education program. Each priority has a central goal, strategies to address the goal and action steps that outline the sequence necessary to ensure each strategy is implemented in a specific, methodical, and consistent manner. The Strategic Plan is intended to be a broad outline of the structure of the special education program. A more detailed Special Education Program Implementation Guide will be developed to provide teachers and staff guidance on program implementation including policies, procedures and program evaluation.

Special Education Taskforce

Representatives

Students:
- Isabel Perez
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Parents:
- April Key–Lee
- Alan Lee
- Amy Cassidy
- Maria Parker Markison

Teachers:
- Susan Dent
- Cynthia Epps
- Nancy James
- Sally Lewis
- Starla Mason
- Suzanne McCallin
- Robyne Moore

Support Staff:
- Marianne Rigdon
- Grozelia Ward

Association Reps:
- Jon Sherr
- Marsha Martin

Administrators:
- Zack Kahn
- Eugene Santillan
- Irma Munoz
- Victoria Forrester
- Dr. Rosanna Mucetti

Superintendent:
- Dr. Mike McLaughlin

Facilitators:
- Dr. Matthew J. Doyle
- JoAnn Murphy
- Dawn Dully



The Special Education Taskforce was composed of students, parents, teachers, administrators and staff charged with the research, design and recommendation of a strategic plan for improved services and support for students with special needs.

Special Education Program Beliefs

- Effective general education is the key to improving special education.
- Collaboration among educators leads to improved student achievement.
- Each student has the right to a challenging, rewarding and inclusive education.
- All students can learn and it is our responsibility to ensure that they do.

Special Education Program Mission

The purpose of the Special Education Program is to provide a high quality, safe and inclusive educational programs that support students with special needs to reach their full academic and behavioral potential in preparation for life and success in college and career through specialized services provided, to the maximum extent possible, in the general education learning environment.

1 Intervention and Identification

Goal:

All students will have academic and behavioral support opportunities implemented in the general education environment that will result in a reduced need for identification for special education services.

Strategy 1

We will develop and implement a multi-tiered system of support that includes high quality first instruction followed up with flexible models of intervention based on individual student need.

Action Plan 1:
Utilize the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles as a foundational component of all lessons and within all learning environments.

Action Plan 2:
Promote a growth mindset approach to teaching and learning that places, at the core of the learning environment, the belief that all students have the opportunity to grow academically and behaviorally.

Action Plan 3:
Develop a consistent district wide response to intervention system that embeds behavioral and academic support into core instruction (Tier 1), pre and/or post lesson intervention to respond quickly to challenges (Tier 2), and an intensive system of supports that compliments (not replaces) core instruction with sufficient flexibility to adapt to the needs of student groups.

Action Plan 4:
Teachers and staff will participate in initial and on-going professional learning and collaboration, in a flexible format, focused on universal design for learning, growth mindset, and Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention strategies and techniques.

Action Plan 5:
Teachers and staff will have access to a menu of researched-based resources that are designed to support Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention environments for English language arts, mathematics and other subjects.

Action Plan 6:
Implement a consistent Positive Behavior Support Intervention System (PBIS) at all grade spans (elementary, middle and high) to proactively promote the social emotional development of all students.

Strategy 2

We will utilize a consistent Student Success Team (SST) model district wide to monitor, revise and implement new interventions, strategies and techniques that are intended to keep the focus on maximizing student achievement in general education.

Action Plan 1:
Develop and implement a "Data Team" model at each school to consistently collect and analyze student academic and behavioral data for the purpose of continually adjusting instruction in the learning environment.

Action Plan 2:
Develop an SST Model that outlines the process, procedures, achievement and behavior data (evidence) and terminology required to ensure a consistent, efficient method for collaboratively identifying proactive support for students with behavior and/or academic challenges.

Action Plan 3:
Develop an assessment plan that identifies a consistent and explicit set of achievement results (Universal Screening, Short, Medium, and Long cycle Assessments) to be used during an SST at each grade span across the district.

Action Plan 4:
Provide a menu of professional development and collaboration opportunities during the school year for teachers and staff to deepen their skills and techniques related to individualized interventions and supports for students at each grade span.

Strategy 3

We will utilize a consistent Student Success Team (SST) model district wide to monitor, revise and implement new interventions, strategies and techniques that are intended to keep the focus on maximizing student achievement in general education.

Action Plan 1:
Follow state and federal IEP regulations (IDEA 2004), focused on maximizing supports within the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

Action Plan 2:
Administer all necessary assessments within state and federal timelines, applying the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) so that students have the necessary access to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and abilities.

Action Plan 3:
Design and implement a comprehensive professional development plan that ensures all staff (general educational and special education), parents, and students understand and are able to actively participate in the IEP development process.

Action Plan 4:
Plan and implement a program that allows students with disabilities to access general education environments for academic as well as social mainstreaming opportunities.

2 Service Delivery Model

Goal:

Develop a program service delivery model that provides equitable access for students into the general education classroom using the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders.



Strategy 1:

We will provide access to quality educational opportunities and services for students in the least restrictive environment.

Action Plan 1: All master schedules give priority to student needs as documented on the individualized education program (IEP) to ensure access to core general education classes.

Action Plan 2: Provide students with IEPs access to services at their school of residence, to the maximum extent possible.

Action Plan 3: Include students with IEPs on general education classroom rosters, to the maximum extent possible.

Strategy 2:

We will inform all stakeholders of the needs of students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Action Plan 1: Seek out and identify stakeholder groups.

Action Plan 2: Provide professional development opportunities to all stakeholders regarding the IEP process and the educational rights of students with IEPs.

Action Plan 3: Create and implement Ability Awareness programs at each school site to recognize and celebrate the individuality and strengths of all students.

Action Plan 4: Provide collaboration opportunities between general education and special education staff to coordinate support for teaching and learning.

Strategy 3:

We will define and implement a Service Delivery Model that allows access for all students to the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

Action Plan 1: District will adopt and define the following components of the new service delivery model: General Education, General Education with Support, Learning Centers, Self-Contained Programs, Related Services.

Action Plan 2: Provide professional development opportunities for all stakeholders focused on the implementation of the service delivery model.

Action Plan 3: Provide collaboration opportunities between and among general education and special education teachers, instructional assistants (Para Educators) and other support personnel related to curriculum development, instructional strategies and differentiation to provide high quality instruction in the classroom.

Action Plan 4: Redefine Special Education staffing roles to implement the service delivery model: Gen. Ed. Teacher, Education Specialist Mild/Moderate Teacher, Education Specialist Moderate/Severe Teacher, Instructional Assistant (Para Educators), Psychologist, Speech and Language Pathologist, Behaviorist, Adaptive P.E., Program Specialist, agency support personnel.

Action Plan 5: The Special Education Department will utilize a staffing database to continually adjust the staffing needs required to implement the service delivery model.



3 Support Systems

Goal:

The special education program will have sufficient, timely support systems in place to ensure the Special Education Strategic Plan is successful.



Strategy 1:

Develop and implement an instructional and facilities resource allocation system that is responsive to the needs of students, teachers and staff.

Action Plan 1: Create a focus group to identify the academic and behavioral resources needed to fully implement the service delivery model (facilities, furniture, supportive devices, etc.).

Action Plan 2: Provide the necessary technology infrastructure, hardware and software to ensure that the special education service delivery model is fully supported in a timely manner.

Action Plan 3: Include the resources necessary for the implementation of the Strategic Plan in the development of the district's Local Control Accountability Plan.

Action Plan 4: Include the resources necessary for the implementation of the Strategic Plan in the development of each school's Single Plan for Student Achievement.

Action Plan 5: The district administration to place priority on being intentional and timely to provide the necessary support systems for students with special needs and student requiring intervention.

Action Plan 6: Develop a Special Education Program Procedural Manual that includes details for implementing procedures and protocols aligned to state and federal regulations.

Strategy 2:

Develop and implement a staffing plan that will ensure the special education service delivery model is successful.

Action Plan 1: Develop and implement a system that will attract and retain high quality certificated and classified personnel.

Action Plan 2: Design and implement a staffing system that will monitor and maintain appropriate staffing levels for certificated and classified personnel based on student need.

Action Plan 3: Design and implement a professional development sequence that provides a cumulative, relevant, comprehensive understanding of the Special Education Strategic Plan, including related research and literature.

Action Plan 4: Design and implement on-going planning and collaboration opportunities that bring general education and special education staff together to define their roles, responsibilities and expectations related to the implementation of the Special Education Strategic Plan.

Strategy 3:

Develop district and site-based programs that actively engage parents and teachers as partners in education.

Action Plan 1: Develop parent workshops to build knowledge and skills necessary to support academic and behavioral achievement at home.

Action Plan 2: In partnership with the PTA, organize community forums for parents to get information about services and supports for students with special needs within the community including academic tutoring and sport leagues.

Action Plan 3: In partnership with the PTA, develop a parent volunteer program that promotes participation.



4 Leadership and Communication

Goal:

The Special Education Department will provide responsive student-centered leadership and timely communication.



Strategy 1:

We will implement a leadership approach that is collaborative, visionary, and transparent.

Action Plan 1: Define a leadership structure and roles that clearly delineate the responsibilities for administrators to take ownership of the Strategic Plan.



Action Plan 2: Actively seek and support new leaders to proactively utilize knowledge and expertise to facilitate the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Action Plan 3: Adequately staff leadership positions to fully support the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Action Plan 4: Develop and utilize a proactive feedback system to address challenges immediately and respond to stakeholder needs.

Action Plan 5: Provide initial and on-going professional development for all district leaders to ensure they have the knowledge and expertise to promote high quality academic and behavioral programs for students with special needs based on grade level standards.

Strategy 2:

We will provide consistent, authentic and responsive two-way communication between staff, family and community.

Action Plan 1: Provide training for all staff in creating and maintaining proactive family and school communication regarding general and special education topics.

Action Plan 2: Provide specialized training for support staff (noon time supervisors, bus drivers, office staff, others) in two-way communication that is respectful, responsive and supportive.



Action Step 3: Utilize a variety of communication tools to provide multiple opportunities for dialogue, feedback and understanding (verbal, digital, written, in-person, etc.).

Action Step 4: Ensure that all major communications related to the Strategic Plan are translated into all necessary languages.

Action Step 5: Continue to refine the Special Education Department website to include timely, relevant information and resources for parents, teachers, and staff.

Action Step 6: Develop and implement community feedback tools (paper-based and digital forms) that actively seek stakeholder input on the efficacy of programs for students with special needs.

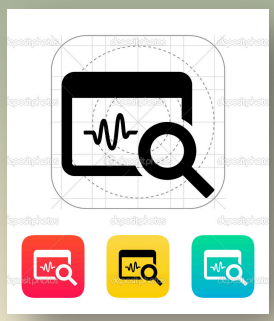
Action Plan 7: Establish a Special Education Program Directory that identifies the lead staff for each chapter in the Strategic Plan. Parent and staff will use this directory when they have questions and/or concerns.



5 Monitoring and Compliance

Goal:

Establish a monitoring and accountability process to ensure that all components of the Strategic Plan are implemented with fidelity.



Strategy 1:

Form a Steering Committee to objectively monitor (check and balance) the implementation of the Special Education Strategic Plan.

Action Plan 1: Work with each stakeholder group to identify representatives for the Steering Committee (students, parents, teachers, staff, neutral facilitator).

Action Plan 2: Design a quarterly meeting calendar that accommodates student and parent schedules.

Action Plan 3: Design an accountability protocol that will allow for an objective review of the effectiveness of the Strategic Plan based on specific success criteria with metrics.

Action Step 4: Establish a timeline to utilize the accountability protocol multiple times during the school year.

Action Step 5: Identify areas for improvement and continued growth in implementing the Strategic Plan based on the data gathered using the accountability protocol.

Strategy 2:

Implement the Special Education Self review (SESR) process two times a year to monitor the status of IEP determination.

Action Plan 1: Assign SESR teams to coordinate the review process in the fall and spring annually.

Action Plan 2: Utilize SESR database to enter review data and archive results.

Action Plan 3: Publish SESR report for each school and a composite report for the district during fall and spring annually.

Action Plan 4: Provide follow-up support based on areas identified for growth related to state and federal regulations.





Strategy 3:

Expand the use of the Special Education Information System (SEIS) to all staff to increase efficiency and responsiveness to student needs.

Action Step 1: Provide professional development to all staff regarding the purpose of SEIS.

Action Step 2: Provide specialized professional development to general education teachers in the use of SEIS to inform their support of students with special needs in the general education classroom.

Action Step 3: Utilize the data archived in SEIS to track the impact of special education services on student achievement and to inform student progress reporting during each grading period.

Action Plan 4: Monitor the accuracy of the data input process for SEIS to ensure the accuracy of information entered into the system.

Action Plan 5: Utilize the SEIS system to prepare for a successful CASEMIS report in December and June annually.

References and Literature

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Taskforce Webpage

Each Special Education Taskforce session included the following components: analyzing district data (academic and program), consulting with state and federal regulations, researching exemplary programs in the state and nation and discussing implications for improving programs in San Leandro. Each session was carefully archived on the Special Education taskforce sub-webpage so that members of the public and staff could follow the progress towards developing the Strategic Plan over time. Notes from collaborative discussions were posted to the webpage immediately after each session. Members also developed a simple summary of Talking Points at the conclusion of each session. To access the Taskforce webpage, visit www.sanleandro.k12.ca.us and click on Special Education Taskforce in the *Site Shortcuts* section.

Over 20 hours of collaboration and discussion was invested in designing the Strategic Plan

