

Specialized Academic Instruction (SAI) Frequently Asked Questions

What is Specialized Academic Instruction?

Specialized Academic Instruction (SAI) is defined as: “Adapting, as appropriate to the needs of the child with a disability the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that he or she can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children.” (34 CFR 300.26(b)(3)).

Why is SDUSD changing to *specialized academic instruction*?

The California State Department of Education (CDE) made changes in the 2006/07 school year on how they report special education services. Therefore, SDUSD is aligning their reporting system with the requirements of the state.

Will *Specialized Academic Instruction* be offered at my site?

Since SAI is a way of describing special education services, SAI will be available at all SDUSD sites in the fall of 2008/09.

How will this change impact the students at my site?

We anticipate this to be a positive change for students and families. It takes us away from labeling students and allows more opportunities and flexibility for them when developing services that meet their individual needs. Staff will need to review IEPs carefully to determine appropriate curriculum and groupings for students.

Are day classes going away?

There will no longer be separate designations by program (i.e., resource specialist, non-severe day class, ED day class, PACE, ILS) listed on the front page of the IEP. The IEP will now say *specialized academic instruction*. If a student's IEP states that a student should receive SAI in a separate class, delivered by a special education teacher, the services may look similar to how they are currently but we won't be calling it a day class.

How will the IEP team determine services for students?

IEPS will be developed as they always have been. By reviewing the services and goals on the IEP, the IEP team will utilize the child's primary Federal Handicapping Condition (FHC) listed along with the amount of time the student will receive service. Then they will decide if the services are provided in general education, in a separate class, in a separate facility, or the community. Additionally, related services will be listed as they have been previously.

What will be the primary instructional service listed on the front of the IEP?

The primary instructional service for most special education services will be listed as *Specialized Academic Instruction* on the front page of the IEP. Related services will continue to be listed on the front page. The disability, which qualifies a student, will also be indicated.

How will SAI be written on the front page of the IEP?

As *specialized academic instruction* is identified, one must also identify the amount of service and the location. A student may have more than one line for this service when the locations are different. For example, you may have one line that indicates (SAI) in general education for 10 hours a week, and another line that indicates (SAI) in a separate class for 5 hours per week.

What should I be doing now to prepare for this change?

We are asking that you begin discussing this change with parents at any IEP held during the remainder of this year, and to document your discussion on the Team Action Page with a simple statement that the change to Specialized Academic Instruction in September 2008 was discussed with the parent/ guardian.

How will case management be determined?

Case management will be determined by the site administrator at the school based on the credentials and experiences of the staff members. This will require staff to see themselves as a team of professionals working together to meet the needs of the students at the site. Sites will receive staffing allocations based on how many staff members are needed with a mild/moderate or moderate/ severe credential.

In the letter to staff dated March 24, 2008, the label ED-SDC was never mentioned. Does that mean that there are no changes for that particular disability?

The change to Specialized Academic Instruction will be used with all disabilities, including ED. This is based on the way the state is requiring us to report services for students.

Will all students be returned to their neighborhood school in September?

No. At middle and high school, families will be given the option to return to their neighborhood school, as all will provide the continuum of support. At elementary, students will continue to be served regionally in our current day class model. However, SAI will be used instead of program labels. As always any parent may discuss service locations at any IEP.

Will School Choice still be available?

Yes, all students (general and special education) are given the same options for enrollment regardless of their special education status. Students with disabilities may attend:

- 1) Their neighborhood school
- 2) A charter school
- 3) A school identified through Enrollment Options
 - Magnet
 - School Choice
 - VEEP
 - Program Improvement School Choice

Will students who are transported remain in their non-neighborhood school or will they receive their hours of SAI at their home school?

There are two separate questions within this question. First is the question of SAI being available at home schools. SAI will be available at all sites in the fall of 2008.

The second question of returning to neighborhood schools is about a process of building capacity at every school, which could take up to three years or longer. However, as students transition at key grades (SEEC to Kindergarten, Elementary to Middle, and Middle to High) the option of returning may be encouraged if appropriate, as that is when all students generally articulate to a new school. Currently, the Middle and High Schools have the services and supports to serve the continuum of student needs. For those who do not have the capacity, staffing has been adjusted so they can for 2008/09.

Students and families who choose to remain at their current location and receive transportation per their IEP will continue to receive this related service.

How can I learn more about SAI?

- Contact your Program Diagnostic Resource Teacher or Program Manager
- Upcoming sessions will be held for staff to learn more about the changes
- Samples of case studies and IEPs will be distributed to assist with understanding how it all fits in Encore
- Continue to check the FAQs on the Special Education website.