



# San Diego Unified School District

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Office of the Deputy Superintendent  
Special Education Programs Division

March 24, 2008

Dear Staff:

This letter is to inform you of a change occurring for the 08-09 school year in identifying special education services for students with disabilities. The California State Department of Education (CDE) made changes in the school year 2006/07 on how they gather and report special education services. Terms such as resource specialist, nonsevere day class, PACE etc., will no longer be used. The primary service for most special education services will now be considered *specialized academic instruction*, 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)). Related services will continue to be listed separately.

Effective September 2008, Specialized Academic Instruction (SAI) will be the instructional service provided to all students who qualify for special education. There will no longer be designations such as ILS, PACE, Nonsevere, etc. as a primary service. The IEP will now have the child's primary Federal Handicapping Condition (FHC) listed along with the amount of time the student will receive service. Also listed will be the amount of time a student will receive SAI in or out of general education. Additional related services (i.e., speech and language,) will continue to be listed separately. SAI can be provided in either the general education or a separate class setting. Based on the amount of time and location of SAI, individual schedules will be developed for each student. So in many cases, a student who is currently spending the majority of the day in a special day class may have SAI support 80-100% of the day in a separate classroom receiving the IEP services as outlined. As always, the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) must be part of all IEP decisions.

**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.**

There will be a series of meetings scheduled in high school cluster areas for staff and parents in April to provide further clarification and address questions. You will be informed of the date, time and place of these meetings by email. Program Diagnostic Resource Teachers and managers will also answer any questions you may have.

### **What will teaching look like for students with IEPs?**

Instruction will continue to be focused on the child's IEP. Staff will develop individual schedules for students based on students needs regardless of previous label (PACE, ILS, NS-SDC) and will have the flexibility to use the special education team at the site. This will provide more flexibility and access to core instruction.

We are aware that change is always difficult. It makes everyone feel unsure and worried about the future. Between the changes in the language and discussion of individual schedules for students, it may seem like too much too soon. We believe that with further discussions, everyone will feel more comfortable with these changes and eventually embrace increased LRE opportunities for our students with disabilities. It is inevitable that there will be rumors and misinformation out at the schools; we appreciate your help in dispelling any of these as you hear them.

Sincerely,

Roxie Jackson  
Executive Director  
Special Education Division

RJ:sc