



**San Diego Unified School District
Special Education Programs Division**

**Next Steps in Special Education Reform
in San Diego Unified School District**

A Unified System for Student Success

February 5, 2009



Critical Issues: Hehir Report Priority Recommendations

1. Improve the instructional program for students with disabilities
2. Assure that general education, including charter schools, takes greater responsibility for the education of children with disabilities
3. Implement an effective early intervention model - Response to Intervention (RTI)



Timelines

- September 2007: Hehir Findings & Recommendations Reports
- April 2008: Workgroups initiated
- July 2008: Special education leadership change
- September 2008: Hehir Follow-up Report and four parent/staff forums (150-300 attendees)
- October 2008: Workgroups reorganized



Timelines

- December 2008: Six cluster-based principal forums
- December 2008: Workgroups complete initial recommendations. Report delivered to the Executive Committee and Superintendent
- January 2009: Report reviewed by Executive Committee, Special Education Community Advisory Committee (CAC)
- January 2009: Report presented to the Board of Education



Workgroup Tasks

- Establish Measurable Outcomes
- Develop preliminary action steps to achieve outcome targets



Workgroup 1: Improving Student Performance Outcomes 1 & 2: Increase CST Performance and Decrease the Achievement Gap

- Outcome 1a-c: Increase the percentage of students with disabilities performing at the Proficient or Advanced levels on the California Standards Test (CST) to 25.4% in English Language Arts and 26.6% in Mathematics by June 2011.
 - This implies a 4% annual increase.
- Outcome 1d-f: Increase the percentage of students with disabilities performing at the Basic level on the CST to 29.5% in English Language Arts and 33.3% in Mathematics by June 2011.
 - This implies a 5% annual increase and would ensure that we also focus on moving students from the below and far below basic levels to the basic level on the CST.
- Outcome 2: Decrease the achievement gap between disabled and non-disabled students (Superintendent's Smart Goal)



Workgroup 1: Improving Student Performance Selected Action Steps to Achieve Outcomes 1 & 2

- Provide professional development in effective instructional strategies for students with disabilities. These strategies include appropriate instructional and curricular accommodations, co-teaching and co-planning, differentiated instruction for diverse learners and research-based interventions in reading and math. These strands of effective instruction are encompassed under the term of Universal Design for Learning (UDL).
- Select and/or create exemplary district programs/schools to serve as service delivery models.
- Align the Educational Technology and Assistive Technology Departments to maximize technological supports to students with disabilities and to support staff who work with students utilizing assistive technology.
- Develop and implement an ongoing system of research into academic interventions using student achievement data to monitor their effectiveness.



Workgroup 2: Building a Unified System

Outcome 3: Placement in the Least Restrictive Environment

- Outcome 3a: By 2011, our target is to decrease the placement of students with high incidence disabilities (specific learning disability, speech and language impairment, other health impairment) who are in special education for 60 to 100% of their school day to 15%. Our current rate is 21.6%.
- Outcome 3b: By 2011, our target is to decrease the placement of students with all other disabilities who are in a special education setting for 60-100% of their school day to 45%. Our current rate is 65.4%.



Workgroup 2: Building a Unified System

Outcome 4: School of Residence

- Outcome 4a: By 2011, our target is to increase the percentage of students with high incidence disabilities attending their elementary school of residence/school of choice from 86% to 95%.
- Outcome 4b: By 2011, our target is to increase the percentage of students with all other disabilities not attending their elementary school of residence/school of choice from 46.6% to 75%.
- Outcome 4c: By 2011, increase the percentage of students with all other disabilities attending their secondary school of residence/school of choice from a baseline 72.7% (middle) and 69.8% (high) to 85%.
- Outcome 4d: Approximate the district's average enrollment of 12% students with disabilities in charter schools by 2011.



Workgroup 2: Building a Unified System

Selected Action Steps to Achieve Outcomes 3 & 4

- In addition to the professional development recommended by Work Group 1, we also will provide professional development around legal obligations, shifting belief systems, effective instructional strategies for students with disabilities and collaboration with parents.
- Identify exemplary classrooms and schools in the district that demonstrate effective inclusion practices.
- Prepare schools to educate all students (including communicating flow of students to site administrators, preparing physical facilities, training all site staff, ensuring appropriate transitions from elementary to middle to high school, and providing information to parents).
- Develop a cadre of resource staff to work with site administrators and site staff in order to facilitate the achievement of performance outcomes.



Workgroup 3: Response to Intervention

Outcome 5: Reducing the Disproportional Identification of African-Americans and ELLs

- Outcome 5: Conduct a complete review of the cumulative files of African-American students identified as emotionally disturbed and a sample of the folders of English Language Learners identified as having a learning disability or a speech and language impairment to determine whether they were provided with a comprehensive evaluation and consideration for placement in the least restrictive environment.



Workgroup 3: Response to Intervention

Outcome 7: Reducing the Disproportional Rate of Suspensions

- Outcome 7a: Reduce the rate of suspension of students with disabilities from 26.6% to a rate lower than 13% by 2011. Currently, students with disabilities are suspended at a rate over twice their percentage of the student population (12.3%). This outcome would reduce the rate to a percentage similar to their percentage of the student population.
- Outcome 7b: Reduce the rate of long-term suspensions defined as six or more cumulative days from 26.1% to 13.0% by 2011. Currently, 26% of students with disabilities who are suspended are suspended for six or more days. This would mean reducing that percentage down to 13%.



Workgroup 3: Response to Intervention Selected Action Steps to achieve Outcomes 5 & 7

- Conduct an independent audit of cumulative records of African-American students identified as ED and English Language Learners identified as SLI/SLD
- Develop a district-wide interventions model (I-III) for at-risk students including a standard pre-Student Study Team (SST) process.
- Revise existing SST process so it aligns with intervention model and pre-SST process.
- Provide all teachers with professional development on Tier I-III instruments, diagnostics, and interventions.
- Identify exemplary school sites and classrooms to serve as demonstration sites for effective practices.



Short-Term Fixes and Other Action Steps

- Changes in the Encore IEP system
- Continue parent and staff forums
- Establish an enhanced parent hotline
- Curtail the practice of sending central office staff to IEP meetings
- Begin planning a Principals' institute
- Significantly curtail the designation of students with disabilities as non-diploma bound
- Develop and disseminate a comprehensive policy and procedure manual



Short-Term Fixes and Other Action Steps

- Complete parent satisfaction survey and identify IEP parent participation rate
- Revisit targets for graduation and drop-out rate
- Low incidence academic interventions/Assistive Technology expansion
- Accountability for students with disabilities performance in administrator evaluation
- Site-level responsibility for students with disabilities through a revised allocation process



Other Current Initiatives

- Reorganization of central office special education administration and supports in alignment with general education organization
- Development of comprehensive professional development plan with Deputy Superintendent
- Integration of special education goals and action steps with District's Strategic Plan



Timeline: Moving Forward

- Nuts & Bolts – June 2009
 - Transparent allocations process (February)
 - Zero-based budgeting (February)
 - Policy & Procedure Manual (March)
 - Reorganization in alignment with proposed plan and other department reorganizations (May)



Timeline: Moving Forward

- Programmatic – June 2009
 - Integrated professional development plan including paraprofessionals and begin planning principal institute (February)
 - Staff/parent forums (March)
 - Initiate the disproportionality audit (March-May)
 - Re-convene workgroups to finalize outcomes (March)
 - Parent satisfaction survey (April)



Questions and Feedback