



Aberdeen School District No. 5 Special Education Task Force Report December 2017

Task Force Members

- Roger L. Heinrich, Ph.D., Director, Special Education
- Lynn Green, Director, Career and Technical Education
- Richard K. Bates, Ed.D., Principal, Robert Gray Elementary School
- Sherri Northington, Principal, Aberdeen High School
- Joan Hoehn, Assistant Principal, Miller Junior High School
- Nell Ellingsen, Behavioral Consultant

Abstract

The purpose of the present study is to evaluate the programming, instruction and services for students with disabilities that will lead to the development of systems, approaches, and practices for improving learning outcomes for students who receive special education services. A glossary of special education acronyms and related terms is provided in Appendix A. The Special Education Task Force was created in August 2017 to carry out this mission and summarize its findings by the end of December 2017.

Method

The Special Education Task Force devoted an entire school day at each of the District's eight schools interviewing special education teachers, general education teachers, administrators, para-educators, and any other school staff who wished to talk with the team. The Task Force examined, through interviews and discussions, "What is working?", "What is not working?", and "Views of future directions and needs for special education." Educational Effectiveness Surveys were created by The Center for Educational Effectiveness in October 2017. The perceptual surveys were customized for the District to include a student survey (Grades 4-12), a parent survey, and a staff survey. The surveys were available in English and Spanish. The students took an online version, parents were given an option of online or traditional paper versions, and staff participated in an online version. The surveys were administered in November 2017. Additionally, in December 2017 the District's superintendent met with special education teachers to discuss programs, hear suggestions, listen to concerns, and assess needs from their perspective.

Further, six members of the Task Force visited the Franklin Pierce School District in Tacoma, Wash., on November 2, 2017 (Appendix B). The Franklin Pierce Special Education Department was recommended to the Task Force by the Capital Region ED 113 as being an exemplary program. The first half of the day was devoted to listening to presentations and having discussions with members of their special education team including: the executive director, assistant director of learning supports, assistant director of early learning, two program specialists, a behavior analyst, and a transition specialist. During the second half of the school day, Task Force members toured various special education programs and then had a final briefing along with a question and answer session.

Results

Through the evaluation process, anecdotal information was collected from various staff, studied, and analyzed for patterns of information and data. As a result of this process, the Task Force has identified *12 Pillars of Effective Special Education Programming*: 1) Alignment, 2) Communication, 3) Continuum of services, 4) Culture, 5) Data, 6) Leadership, 7) Personnel, 8) Outcome orientation, 9) Oversight and Accountability, 10) Partnerships, 11) Resources, and 12) Structures. Data that was gathered has been organized into these 12 categories, and are included for reference in Appendix C.

Conclusions

The data is extensive and presents a clear picture of our current programming, instruction, and services for students with disabilities. Trends emerged from this data that indicate some best practices are in place, however, there is inconsistency across the District's schools. Additionally, some gaps have been identified that present an opportunity to improve our special education programming. The following is a summary of the identified trends that constitute our District's current capacity to get the job done along with future directions for each of the 12 Pillars.

Pillar 1: Alignment

Special education is optimized when there is alignment of programs, services and practices which supports both students and staff. This alignment should include an alignment of special education with general education, as well as an alignment across the District and across grade levels with special attention provided to support transitions.

With the probable exception of students with an intellectual disability (ID) who benefit more from a functional curriculum to learn life skills and activities of daily living, students with disabilities should access the general education core curriculum with supplemental instruction as needed. It is for this reason that special education staff attend professional development for the core curriculum. However, core curriculum materials are not available to special education staff at every school or available for use outside of the general education classroom. Additionally, the supplemental components of core materials are not consistently utilized across the District.

The transitions between grade span programs, PK->K, 6th->7th, 8th->9th, and HS->post-school, are typically supported with communication at IEP meetings in the spring prior to the transition. In some

cases, there is a delay to initiate services in the new placement in the fall, which reflects a lack of coordination in writing the transition IEP with the incoming school. This transition process can be improved with a more systematic approach to transition IEPs that includes increased coordination between the two schools and expectations for immediate implementation at the beginning of the new school year in the new placement.

Pillar 2: Communication

A paramount need for any organization is communication, which includes the necessity that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of expectations, processes, and practices. It also includes having two-way communication to exchange ideas and provide feedback so that expectations, processes, and practices can be continually improved.

Special education includes both compliance-driven and programmatic requirements. It is important that the District provide frequent updates and training to special education staff on a regular and ongoing basis. A monthly meeting of special education staff with the special education director has been initiated this year for this purpose, as well as to get real-time feedback from staff.

In the area of special education, there is a need for both job-alike collaboration to share and learn from other special education staff as well as the need to consult with general education staff about specific students as they work together to develop and implement each IEP. This is not happening consistently at every school and across the District, and is an area of needed support and guidance.

There are many staff positions involved in the special education programs across the District. Expectations for personnel are often unclear, only given verbally, and are inconsistent across schools. Written expectations at each school should be developed, reviewed regularly, and revised as program needs change.

Special education includes many facets of instruction and transition to the world outside of education. The District serves students ranging from birth to 21 years of age in various capacities. Sharing the availability and awareness of these programs with parents and the community is vital to the success of these programs. The District will develop brochures and handbooks outlining the services that are provided. These will be available on the District website and at each school.

Pillar 3: Continuum of Services

The continuum of special education services for students with disabilities is an array of services to meet individual student's needs that includes: direct teacher services; consultant teacher services; resource teacher services, and related services including speech and language, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and nursing.

A continuum of alternative placements is required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and must ensure that a continuum of placements, in which to provide special education and related services, is available to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Currently, the District's approach is "cross-categorical" to providing special education. With the exception of the ID programs at A.J. West and Aberdeen High School (AHS), students with disabilities are in general education classrooms, often without the specialized programming for specific disabilities. The impact of this approach is that student needs are not always met, which can result in disruptive behaviors having an adverse effect in the school.

Specialized programming for students with significant emotional, behavioral, and/or mental health challenges, and students with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD), were found to be areas of need within the District. There is an identified need for a coordinated set of services, support and instruction that will enable students with significant emotional, behavioral, and/or mental health challenges to access the general education curriculum with accommodations and modifications.

The need for specialized services for students on the autism spectrum is another identified area of significant need. A variety of services, depending on the need of each individual student, needs to be available. These services can range from academic or social skills support to a more intensive comprehensive program.

Additionally, K-8 students with moderate ID would benefit from a specialized program with a functional curriculum that emphasizes life skills. This would be in addition to the current K-8 program for more severe ID at A.J. West. Currently, this program option for moderate ID is only available at the high school level.

Pillar 4: Culture

Culture is a complex mixture of beliefs and practices that defines how we work together. It includes beliefs about our students, as well as beliefs about ourselves. Our practices include not only the operational procedures of our work, but also the many relationships that underlie our work together.

Providing a climate where all students are welcome and are able to find *a place* is a hallmark of a successful educational institution. We should continue to develop an environment at our schools which reminds all educators of their agency in student outcomes, particularly for those students with disabilities. We can also appreciate that success for one student will not be the same for another.

Establishing optimal relationships with students and their families is foundational toward reaching academic and life skills goals for each student. In addition, educators benefit from optimal relationships with colleagues – to share best practices, innovative ideas, and problem-solve together.

There is a need for consistency in developing and supporting positive beliefs about special education and productive practices in this area across the District. Through mentoring, shared practices, and

collaboration the District will define the “Aberdeen Way” as our culture to welcome and support all students, along with cultivating relationships with families and among educators.

Pillar 5: Data

With the purpose of providing meaningful programming for our students with disabilities, IEP goals need to be targeted and intentional, based on each student’s individual needs and current performance academically, socially, and behaviorally.

Special education staff do not always have access to timely, accurate, and informative data with which to craft goals and incremental levels of growth that follow a line of trajectory toward attainment. Having this data is a best practice that supports staff in creating goals for students with disabilities, using data to establish a baseline, and intentionally monitoring student progress toward the goal to ensure growth. This should be a practice in all goal areas, including behavior.

In order to achieve these goals, it is important that staff are provided support so they understand and utilize data that is easily accessible. Grading practices concerning students with disabilities is also an identified area of focus. A future direction is to establish consistent practices across the District for grading.

Pillar 6: Leadership

Leadership at the District and building levels is critical in creating a vision for and supporting all programs and initiatives in the District. Communicating effectively, ensuring consistency in practices, being visible and approachable, and supporting staff in their roles are all attributes of an effective leader.

A building administrator must be involved in IEP development and should be present in IEP meetings to support staff, students, and families. This practice is not consistent across all schools in the District and needs to be shored up.

In special education, ensuring all staff understand their roles is vital. Special education staff often have specific job responsibilities that vary from general education staff. Our leaders will work to establish and communicate clarity of roles and responsibilities for staff. Organizational and responsibility charts will be developed and disseminated.

Pillar 7: Personnel

The recruitment and retention of high quality special education staff, both certified and classified, is critical for the short-term and long-term success of special education in the District. Recruiting, hiring and developing capacity of candidates both within and outside of the District is crucial.

Procedures and strategies to ensure ongoing recruitment, the early posting of positions, and strategically advertising the positions in markets that could yield success in hiring staff from outside the

District should be developed and utilized. Internal processes that identify potential candidates within the District need to be formalized. Both certified and classified staff who demonstrate promising skills and positive attitudes about students who receive special education services and special education programs should be encouraged to seek training and positions in special education.

Develop hiring practices that encourage and foster an understanding that a new member is being added to an existing team. When possible, include other staff who will be working with the newly hired to ensure buy-in by current staff members.

Developing capacity within our special education staff is critical. Each new staff member, certificated or classified, needs to have a mentor. Mentors for classified staff can be a person who is currently in a job-alike role. Certificated staff should have a formal mentor who will be a guide and sounding board for the new staff member throughout the first and second years of employment in the District. Mentors should attend the new staff orientation as well as provide on-the-job training and support on topics such as: IEP writing, using the IEP Online program, classroom management, use of para-educators, working with general education staff, and working with parents. Growth and retention of staff are critical components of success and effective methods need to be established.

All staff have the need for support, consultation, and collaboration. Monthly meetings for certificated staff with job-alike colleagues and the special education director needs to continue. During the meeting, information can be disseminated, training and technical assistance can be provided, and certificated staff can consult with one another. A formalized weekly meeting of all special education staff at each school must be built into schedules. Classified staff also need to meet frequently with certificated for skill development and support.

All special education staff need clear, specific, written expectations for their assignments. Expectations should be reviewed regularly and updated as duties are changed. These expectations are school specific and should expand on the generic job descriptions used by the Human Resources Department. The generic descriptions should be reviewed regularly and updated by the human resources administrator and special education director.

Hands-on involvement of the administrator at the building level is required. Site administrators must attend IEP meetings and be involved in all facets of the development and maintenance of the special education department at their school. Building administrators and the special education director need to meet regularly for training, consultation and support.

All staff need training in Right Response (de-escalation techniques) prior to beginning employment in a special education setting. Additional professional development is also needed in effective instructional practices, behavioral interventions, and general education curriculum.

Pillar 8: Outcome Orientation

The process for a successful transition for all students receiving special education services from high school into their postsecondary pursuits requires a systematic transition structure that identifies the specific skills each student needs.

Students ages 3 to 21 may be eligible for an IEP. Transition services are required for all IEPs beginning no later than the first IEP to be in effect when a student turns 16 years old. With the coordination of services provided through transition services (DVR/DSHS for students with IDs), WorkSource Washington, families, CTE programs and the Special Education Department staff, each student will gain knowledge and expertise in their area of interest.

Collaboration will be key amongst all stakeholders to ensure each student has a transition plan that is tailored to their identified goals and needs. Documenting and planning these components in a consistent manner will help ensure individual student success at each level of their school career.

Pillar 9: Oversight and Accountability

Oversight and accountability are the responsibility of all staff members in the Aberdeen School District. Clear expectations, compliance, analysis, and evaluations of systems, programs, and individual student plans are important to ensure students receiving special education services receive a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.

It is important that district and school staff members coordinate efforts, share resources, and follow laws, board policies, and procedures. Further, it is vital that staff members complete the tasks they are assigned, perform the duties required by their job, and be present for their assignments in order to fulfill or further the goals of the organization.

The development of clear and consistent expectations, desired outcomes, and special education compliance timelines will further help the staff and students in moving toward their goals.

Pillar 10: Partnerships

The District's capacity to provide quality special education can be enhanced through strategic partnerships with all stakeholders and outside organizations.

Parents of students with special needs are key stakeholders and there is a strong interest to improve these partnerships. A future direction in this area is to establish a Special Education Advisory Committee for the District to include staff and parent representation from all schools.

Currently the District has productive partnerships with many outside organizations that support the total educational programming. These partnerships include: True North (substance abuse support), Navigator (mental health support for JDC students), Behavior Health Resources, which provides on-site counseling at most schools in the District, the school resource officer who works with all schools,

Catholic Community Services (for individual students and their families), Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department and Social and Health Services, WorkSource Washington (provides skills training for all students), and United Way of Grays Harbor (provides coats districtwide).

A variety of CTE programs are offered in our secondary schools to all students. Students receiving special education services access these programs with various levels of support as directed by their IEPs. Community partners including Grays Harbor Community Hospital, Twin Star Credit Union, local radio stations, Grays Harbor College, Greater Grays Harbor Inc., and Grays Harbor County have enhanced student experiences in gaining employability skills, technical skills, and work-based learning experiences. The District will review further opportunities to partner with local businesses and organizations to expand opportunities for community and work-based learning.

A future direction for the District is to partner with a university with a special education department. A partnership of this nature could provide a pipeline for future employees as well as provide training and resources for best practices in the field.

Pillar 11: Resources

The allocation of resources across the District to support our programs is an ongoing challenge. In special education, our District consistently serves more students than funding from state and federal sources supports. This results in utilizing local effort assistance funds to supplement the program needs. With legislative changes in funding structures, this is a major area of concern.

Staffing support across the District will be reviewed to ensure both certificated and classified staff are allocated appropriately based on student needs in each school.

Resources for programs and classrooms include, but are not limited to, staffing, curriculum materials, and technology. In order to provide adequate support and consistency across the District, core and supplemental curriculum materials will be reviewed to ensure all special education teachers have access to appropriate content for their students.

Pillar 12: Structures

The District's structure for supporting students with behavior and academic needs has been frequently separated into either general education or special education. The general education programs and special education programs have frequently operated as separate silos, with little integration of support systems that should apply for all students. The impact of this separation has been far-reaching, and is an area that can be addressed and improved.

The process of identifying students who are eligible for special education services is currently being reviewed and refined. We have provided schools with resources for pre-referral interventions for both behavior and academics. In addition, we have revised our Student Study Team (SST) process, which now includes consistent procedures across all schools. The ability to determine if a student is in need of

supports within general education, as opposed to special education services, will be a focus for the coming year.

As we institute PBIS throughout the District and unify as a staff to address issues consistently, clear behavioral expectations will be set so students and staff can identify acceptable behaviors and address unacceptable behaviors. Behaviors needing more intensive intervention will be clearly defined. Staff, students, and parents will be made aware of what the process will look like to address these challenges. Each school has a program that can be developed and expanded to broadly incorporate the foundation PBIS is developing.

In addition to PBIS for behavior, the District will be developing our system for academic supports. Together, the academic and behavioral supports will comprise a pyramid of interventions commonly referred to as the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). Although pieces of this academic support are currently in place through our general education LAP and Title I programs, there is a need to develop and integrate academic supports within an MTSS framework. This will include professional development for staff to build our capacity to provide the MTSS programs and services.

Additional structures to be addressed include the use of time to include general education staff in the IEP process, and systems to streamline paperwork.

Next Steps

Based on this extensive review of the current status of special education in the District, along with the identified needs, it is recommended that an action plan be developed with specific steps to be taken in the early spring of 2018. This action plan should also include projected actions to be taken in 2018-19 and 2019-20. This action plan should include the identified future directions for each of the *12 Pillars of Effective Special Education Programming* as delineated in Appendix C.

Appendix A: Glossary

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) – A global nonprofit organization dedicated to closing the achievement gap by preparing all students for college or other postsecondary opportunities.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) – A plan to help replace problem behaviors with more positive ones.

Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) – A state agency that is responsible for providing public assistance programs to the population they serve.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) – Its mission is to transform lives by creating pathways for self-sufficiency through meaningful partnerships, employment, new opportunities, and effective rehabilitation.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) – All children with disabilities, regardless of the type or severity of their disability, shall receive a free, appropriate public education. This education must be provided at public expense, without cost to the parents.

Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) – Developed to ascertain the purpose or reason for behaviors displayed by individuals with significant emotional, behavioral, and/or mental health challenges.

Individualized Education Program (IEP) – A federal law called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that public schools create an IEP for every child receiving special education services. Students ages 3 to 21 may be eligible for an IEP. An IEP is a legally binding document meant to address each child's unique learning issues and includes specific educational goals. The school must provide everything it includes in the IEP.

Intellectually Disabled (ID) – Intellectual disability is a disability characterized by significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior, which covers many everyday social and practical skills.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) – A four-part (A-D) piece of federal legislation that ensures students with a disability are provided with Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) that is tailored to their individual needs.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) – IDEA mandates that students with disabilities be educated with children without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate and that students with disabilities be removed to separate classes or schools only when the nature or severity of their disabilities are such that they cannot receive an appropriate education in a general education classroom with supplementary aids and services.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) – A framework to help students graduate from high school ready for career, college and life. It offers different levels of academic and nonacademic services and supports based on individual student needs.

Positive Approach to Student Success (PASS) – A process for managing the behavior of students identified as behaviorally at-risk or emotionally/behaviorally disturbed. PASS provides explicit teaching of behavioral expectations in mainstream settings.

School-Wide Information System (SWIS) – A reliable, confidential, web-based information system out of the University of Oregon to collect, summarize, and use student behavior data for decision making.

Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) – Advises the district regarding special education services, policy and procedures. The committee fosters a partnership between the school district, families, and the community that is essential to the success of exceptional children.

Special Education Steering Committee (SESC) – A group of district staff that meets throughout the year to discuss special education in the District.

Section 504 (504 or 504 Plan) – A civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. Section 504 ensures that the child with a disability has equal access to an education. The child may receive accommodations and modifications.

Appendix B: Franklin Pierce School District Visit

Programs that were visited and/or discussed at the Franklin Pierce School District include:

<p><i>Early Childhood Services</i></p>	<p>Provides quality early childhood education to enhance skills in the areas of social, cognitive, behavior, motor, adaptive, and communication in order to move children along the developmental continuum toward independence and success in school.</p>
<p><i>Resource Services</i></p>	<p>Provides a coordinated set of instruction and supports that will enable every student to access the general education curriculum with accommodations and/or modifications.</p>
<p><i>Support Center Services</i></p>	<p>Provides a coordinated set of instruction and support that will enable students with intellectual disabilities to become an active, contributing member of the community.</p>
<p><i>Behavior Services</i></p>	<p>Provides behavioral supports at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels, and provides a coordinated set of services, support and instruction that will enable students with significant behavioral challenges, to access the general education curriculum with accommodations and/or modifications.</p>
<p><i>Community Based Learning Programs (CBL)</i></p>	<p>Provides high school students who have significant behavior challenges with a wide range of learning opportunities in the community to help them pursue a post-school outcome as a successful employee and community member.</p>
<p><i>Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Services</i></p>	<p>Provides a variety of services depending on individual needs. Many attend general education classes with resource room support in academic or social skills or they may only need accommodations. Other students may require more comprehensive programs.</p>
<p><i>Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)</i></p>	<p>Advises the district regarding special education services, policy and procedures. The committee fosters a partnership between the school district, families, and the community that is essential to the success of exceptional children.</p>

Appendix C: Pillars of Effective Special Education Programs

Pillar 1: Alignment

Key Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cohesiveness across the District <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Terminology ○ Practices ○ Programs / Services ● Supported Transitions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pre - K ○ 6th - 7th ○ 8th - 9th ○ HS - Post HS
What's Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Special education staff were included in training for general education core ELA curriculum ● There is a recognition and an interest to improve special education
What's Not Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support for each student is not immediate and intentional at all schools ● Lack of cohesiveness across the District ● Lack of system (programs/services) knowledge ● Significant time delay to initiate related services at the beginning of each year
Future Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Formalize transitions from grade to grade ● Formalize transitions from level to level (preschool, elementary, junior high, and high school) ● Establish dates to initiate services at the beginning of each year

Pillar 2: Communication

Key Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clarity of roles and responsibilities (administrators, teachers, and support staff) ● Student needs shared with all teachers involved (classroom, general education, special education, specialists, CTE, etc.) in a timely manner ● Development of Special Education Steering Committee (SESC)
What's Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Monthly meetings with special education director and the special education teachers ● There is a recognition and an interest to improve special education ● School psychologists are thorough in providing accurate information to teachers and families at all levels ● At some schools, general education staff are involved in IEP development
What's Not Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of collaboration between general education and special education staff ● IEPs are not accessible (wording, availability) to general education staff ● General education staff and administrators are not involved in IEP development at some schools ● Consistency (perhaps more specificity) between job descriptions (or expectations) and supports for para-educators
Future Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review Child Find and preschool systems for special education identification ● Right Response plans need to be in place for unsafe behaviors ● Master schedule of IEP meetings developed the previous spring ● "IEP at a glance" given to general education staff ● Develop handbook and brochures about special education and support services ● Establish SESC to include special and general education staff

Pillar 3: Continuum of Services

Key Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Programs and Services for the full range of disabilities: Mild - Moderate - Severe
What's Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● AHS has a continuum of services (about 5 different levels of service) ● AHS PASS program provides behavioral programming with potential for community-based programming ● Support for each student is immediate and intentional at some schools ● Functional curriculum and programming works at the elementary level and partially at AHS ● Adaptive life skills curriculum is working well at the elementary level and is partially working at the secondary level ● Staff request training in autism
What's Not Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Extreme behaviors – significant impact on education for all ● In elementary and junior high, all students (except ID) are in the same programs ● Junior high seems to be an island
Future Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Need for additional specialized programs (especially ASD, behavior and moderate ID) ● Professional development in specialized needs for certain disabilities

Pillar 4: Culture

Key Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Beliefs about students and adults● Practices that are consistently effective and efficient● Optimal relationships with student, staff and among educators
What's Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Staff believe that every student can be challenged to perform to the best of their ability● Some schools have a healthy, supportive climate about special education● There is a recognition and an interest to improve special education● At some schools, general education staff are involved in IEP development
What's Not Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Some schools do not have a healthy, supportive culture and climate about special education● Some staff do not hold high expectations for students with disabilities● Lack of consistency from school to school (lack of "Aberdeen Way")
Future Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Develop the "Aberdeen Way" as our culture, which includes high expectations for students, consistent practices/procedures, mentoring and collaboration

Pillar 5: Data

Key Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Need for accurate, current and relevant data ● Need for data to be easily accessible to staff ● Capacity to use data in making decisions about goals, grading, programs and services
What's Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School psychologists are thorough in providing accurate information to teachers and families at all levels ● AHS has differential grading
What's Not Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Concerns about grading students receiving special education services ● Current data is not always readily available ● Inconsistent use of data to monitor and measure progress ● Data about student behavior is inconsistent across schools
Future Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Include SWIS data system at every elementary school ● Utilize a data management system that provides a <i>Data Dashboard</i> ● Incorporate practical information (not just deficits) about post-school outcomes at IEP meetings starting in junior high ● Need to address grading of students receiving special education services ● Provide professional development in data literacy

Pillar 6: Leadership

Key Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Capacity● Consistency● Visibility● Communication● Clarity of roles and responsibilities● Courage
What's Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Administrative involvement at some schools● At some schools, principals are involved in IEP development● At some schools, principals are involved in IEP meetings
What's Not Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● At some schools, principals are not involved in IEP development● At some schools, principals are not involved in IEP meetings● At some schools, administrators lack knowledge about special education
Future Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Establish and communicate clarity of roles and responsibilities for all staff● Develop and disseminate organizational chart and responsibility chart● Provide professional development for administrators about special education

Pillar 7: Personnel

Key Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hiring/retention ● Pipeline/recruitment ● Position/job description/evolving needs ● Supervision/evaluation ● Professional development and support
What's Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Administrative involvement at some schools ● Veteran staff support new staff at some schools ● Monthly meetings with the special education director and the special education teachers
What's Not Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● General education staff have skill-gaps (not will-gaps) ● Lack of consistency (perhaps more specificity) between job descriptions (or expectations) and supports for para-educators ● Lack of administrative involvement at some schools ● Lack of coordination between school and district leadership ● Lack of training for para-educators ● Right Response certification/recertification is not provided to staff at the beginning of the year, and not all staff who need it get it (including general education staff) in a timely manner ● Some special education staff have left to go into general education ● Veteran staff do not support new staff at some schools ● Para-educators with little/no training assigned to high needs students ● Retention problems with experienced para-educators ● Burn-out of staff dealing with behaviors, causing some to leave district
Future Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Need to elevate special education in order to attract and retain staff, both certified and classified ● Establish and communicate clarity of roles and responsibilities for all staff ● Develop and disseminate organizational chart and responsibility chart ● Review current job descriptions and update as needed ● Create new job descriptions as needed ● "Grow our own" focus ● Reallocation of para-educator support ● Provide professional development for both general and special education staff to include meeting the needs of students needing support

Pillar 8: Outcome Orientation

Key Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explicit planning for Post-Secondary outcomes ● Coordination of district programs and with community resources ● Transition programs
What's Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School psychologists are thorough in providing accurate information to teachers and families at all levels
What's Not Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● AHS – post-school transition weak for resource and PASS students ● Lack of coordination of CTE and special education programs ● Special education staff are not trained in AVID
Future Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Need to coordinate with DSHS and DVR for AHS students with IDs ● Develop AVID strategies to support students with disabilities ● Incorporate practical information (not just deficits) about post-school outcomes at IEP meetings starting in junior high ● Ensure transition programs are in place ● Establish database of post-secondary outcomes for SWD ● Ensure high school counseling program supports SWD

Pillar 9: Oversight and Accountability

Key Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Accurate understanding of least restrictive environment (LRE) ● Accurate understanding of free appropriate public education (FAPE) ● Development of a special education advisory committee (SEAC)
What's Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Right Response certification/recertification is appropriate training and consistently provided to continuing staff
What's Not Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Right Response certification/recertification is not provided to staff at the beginning of the year, and not all staff who need it get it (including general education staff) in a timely manner ● Significant time delay to initiate related services at the beginning of each year ● Extreme behaviors – significant impact on education for all ● Compliance with IEP minutes of service ● Questions about over-identification in Pre-K ● Lack of administrative involvement at some schools ● Lack of coordination between school and district leadership ● Lack of consistency in curriculum ● Unsafe student behaviors are tolerated, staff and students get injured ● Data about incidents/accidents are not well tracked or coordinated ● Large caseloads
Future Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Get response plans in place for unsafe behavior ● Develop a list of “must dos” for administrators and provide training and exemplars ● Utilize the IEP review process to update/adjust when needed ● Establish a system for student incident/accident data (school and district level) ● Need to address grading of students receiving special education services ● Establish SEAC with stakeholders (parents, staff, community)

Pillar 10: Partnerships

Key Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Community organizations such as mental health, workforce development, social services, future employers ● Institution(s) of higher education ● Parent Involvement
What's Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● AHS PASS program provides behavioral programming w/potential for community-based programming ● There is a recognition and an interest to improve special education ● Functional curriculum and programming works at the elementary level and partially at AHS
What's Not Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of parental involvement ● Parents/guardians of students with IDs don't fully access resources ● Lack of family participation in IEP meetings at the secondary level
Future Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop partnership with university for interns and student teachers ● Strengthen parent partnerships ● Community-based learning (CBL) with tiered experiences starting in 6th grade; explore partnerships with CTE ● Need to coordinate with DSHS and DVR for AHS students with IDs

Pillar 11: Resources

Key Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Curriculum and instructional materials● Technology
What's Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● AHS special education chair provides strong support – students have supports, special education teachers have support and resources● Right Response certification/recertification is appropriate training and consistently provided to continuing staff
What's Not Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Lack of consistency in curriculum● Concern that handwriting is not taught● Concern that high school does not have ELA workbooks● Concern that Touch Math needs digital components● Lack of training with special education curriculum● Lack of consistent access to general education core materials
Future Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Establish what curricula (core and supplemental) should be in all special education classes and fill in the gaps● Provide professional development for curriculum● Ensure appropriate technology for SWD

Pillar 12: Structures

Key Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pre-referral/referral process ● PBIS / MTSS ● Special education staff meetings ● Steering Committee (staff) ● Special Education Advisory Committee (all stakeholders)
What's Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cohesiveness within some schools ● PBIS has started at every school ● AHS PASS program provides behavioral programming w/potential for community-based programming ● Monthly meetings with special education director and the special education teachers
What's Not Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● General and special education exist as separate silos ● Competing commitments of staff preclude participation in IEP meetings at the secondary level ● Lack of cohesiveness across the District ● Lack of system (programs/services) knowledge ● Multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) is non-existent ● PBIS: Tier I starting at every school but lacking Tier II & III at all schools ● There is not shared ownership of students receiving special education services with general education staff
Future Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement PBIS district-wide, including PBIS Tiers II & III (including BIPs, IEPs, and Section 504s) ● Optimize (or revamp - rename - fold into PBIS Tier II) use of K.I.D.S.' Room ● Establish MTSS ● Better coordination of Right Response certification/recertification ● Develop systems to streamline paperwork