

**Executive Summary: Roadmap to Special Education Spring 2017**

In the Spring of 2016, The Council of Great City Schools<sup>1</sup> authored a report on the state of Special Education Services in our District. The report rendered 11 recommendations that stressed necessary, whole system improvements and alignment between general education and special education services to address quality of service. The report highlighted issues of equity that lead towards poor outcomes for students with disabilities, specifically quality of instruction, poorly written Individual Education Programs (IEPs), and allocation of programs to name a few. We started sharing the Council Report with stakeholders and are using the recommendations to adjust our Special Education Roadmap. We will conduct focus groups by the end of the school year to collect stakeholder feedback on our roadmap adjustments and update our Special Education Roadmap by June 2017.

We currently provide services to 5,902 students, an increase of over 600 students since December 2015. There has also been a dramatic increase of 444 students that have qualified for special education services from December 2016-March 2017, just under 3 months. This increase represents a few concerns: identification of students for testing prior to thoroughly attempting school based interventions; impacts our ability to deliver quality service and our caseloads are over impacted. Our teachers, in some schools and some programs, are over the soft cap<sup>2</sup> written in the Oakland Education Association (OEA) contract. When a teacher goes above soft cap, the contract calls for a support plan which is created by Special Education Department for the teacher.

Below is a table that demonstrates the increase in the number of students we have served since 2013 and percent of classrooms over soft caps. Our department team has completed 553 initial assessments from August-January and have 800 assessments pending in our Special Education Information System (SEIS).

Enrollment 2013-current		Percent of Programs Over Ratio	
Year	Total Students w/Disabilities	2016-2017 Programs	Over Ratio
12/2013	5,085	Resource Program	23%
12/2014	5,288	SDC K-5	30%
12/2015	5,315	SDC 6-8	28%
12/2016	5,458	SDC 9-12	29%

<sup>1</sup> [Council of Great City Schools Report](#) is located on the OUSD Website, Special Education Program tab for the public to review. Chapter 4 nicely summarizes the [11 Recommendations](#) that we are socializing with families, teachers, principals, support staff, central office staff, and community.

<sup>2</sup> Soft cap refers to adding additional students beyond the ratios stated in the OEA Contract (14:1 Mild/Moderate and 11:1 Moderate/Severe) if a support plan is provided to the teacher.

3/2017	5,902 (SEIS)			
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We are currently receiving technical assistance from the California Department of Education (CDE) to increase our Individual Education Program (IEP) compliance rate. This assistance allows for us to take corrective action to create quality IEPs. Special Education staff receive corrections and then work with individual teachers to make necessary improvements. CDE has noted increases to the quality of our IEPs over the last 6 months.

Much discussion and attention has focused on the budget necessary to provide special education services. We have implemented hiring and spending freezes and oversight measures on the use of Non-Public Agencies and Non-Public School (NPS) services. It is important to note that the number of students participating in a NPS setting has decreased from 213 to 186; however the rates associated to provide services have increased by an average of 9%. Additionally, we are responding to the overages in caseloads by adding necessary school staffing to provide services to students. In order to properly invest in our school programs, there will be a dramatic decrease to the Special Education Department by reducing administrative positions. The exact organizational structure will be developed through use of the OUSD Budget Development Tool scheduled to be open to departments the week of March 20, 2017.

We must address our quality issues to gain the trust from students, families, and staff. As we are making the necessary improvements to increase service and program quality, it is important to celebrate our success along the way. Below is our progress to date on the 4 Priority Areas of our Special Education Road Map:



**Priority 1: Policies and Structures**

- Completed integration between Special Education Information System (SEIS) and District Student Information System (AERIES). Continue to work with state on transition to a single State Data System (CALPADS).
- Timely and accurate accounting of students participating in Special Education Program. Currently, work is underway to improve the coding guidelines schools use when enrolling students.



**Priority 2: Programs for Equity**

- Inclusion programs developed last year are on the move! Leaders, teachers, support staff and families are working together so that students with disabilities are members of a general education classroom and receive Specialized Academic Instruction to support their individual learning needs according to their Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- Goal: 100% of schools receive training on how to support students in the least restrictive environment so students

receive appropriate services at their home school.

- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) was developed in the Fall through cross departmental collaboration and principal feedback through principal meetings. Departments included Teaching and Learning, Community Schools Student Services, and Special Education. Training offered to principals during principal professional learning. Our District Teams need to go much further in expanding the framework to every school. Cross-departmental team attending training on how to “systematize” MTSS throughout our District through Coordinated Early Intervention System (CEIS) Plan.
- Program placement is underway. We are expanding the number of programs to accommodate the increase in the number of students we serve and in order to meet soft caps as written in the OEA Contract for 2017-2018 (13:1 in Mild Moderate; 10:1 in Moderate/Severe).
- Non-Public Schools Request for Proposals is underway. We are accepting proposals until April 7, 2017. Reviewing proposals and creating a contract by April 28, 2017. Locations are not yet finalized.



**Priority 3: Culturally, Linguistically Responsive, & Inclusive Practices**

- Professional Learning designed for new Special Education Teachers and Support Staff, including partnership with New Teacher Support Team;
- Monthly professional learning is shifting toward differentiated, job-alike cohorts and is often co-lead by classroom teachers;
- Instructional Support Staff are participating in on-line training to become Behavior Techs;
- Special Education Leadership began school walkthroughs to observe programs as a team;
- Disability awareness training provided to general education faculty during many site-based Professional Learning Communities;
- Implemented Consultancy Model for School Psychologists
- New schools have been identified to expand inclusive practices for 2017-2018.



**Priority 4: Community Engagement**

- Renew partnership with the Special Education Community Advisory Committee (CAC). CAC is lead by Co-Chairs; has an active Board including a student representative and meets regularly.
- Reduce number of parent complaints to District from 31 to 14. To date, there have been 6 complaints filed regarding Special



Education Department Services.

- Reduce the number of parent complaints to CA Department of Education from 21 to 10. To date, there are 10 complaints filed.
- Launching focus groups to gather feedback on Special Education Roadmap updated in response to Council of Great City Schools report. April 2017-June 2017.