

Board Office Use: Legislative File Info.	
File ID Number	21-2630
Introduction Date	11/3/21
Enactment Number	
Enactment Date	



Board Cover Memorandum

To Board of Education

From Kyla Johnson-Trammell, Superintendent
Sondra Aguilera, Chief Academic Officer

Meeting Date November 3, 2021

Subject Update to Board on Special Education Resolution No. 2021-0159

Ask of the Board Receive an update on the progress made towards implementation of the Resolution to support students with disabilities. Provide feedback on the findings and the proposed plans to support inclusive access for students with disabilities.

Background In June 2021, the Board of Education passed a resolution to support students with disabilities in increasing access to extracurricular activities. The resolution directed staff to assess the way in which students with disabilities are included in extracurricular activities and make recommendations to increase awareness of opportunities and access to participation.

Discussion The board will receive an update from staff on current steps towards implementing the elements of resolution including a report to the board and an overall response to key questions:

- What are the barriers to participation in school activities for Students With Disabilities?
- What activities do families want to participate in that they can't participate in now?
- What could the board do to increase access for students?

Fiscal Impact A budget was included as part of the original resolution. N/A for this item.

Attachment(s)

- Presentation
- Report

Students with Disabilities Access Resolution Report

<p>Purpose: Provide update to the Board of Education on Resolution 2021-0159 - Ensuring Access to Social Emotional and Academic Supports for Students with Disabilities. This report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides data and root cause analysis relative to barriers for students with disabilities accessing enrichment and extracurricular activities; • Summarizes our progress implementing strategies aligned to some of the barriers; • Provides additional recommendations for further investment and prioritization related to this work 	<p>Date: 11/3/2021</p>
<p>Prepared by:</p> <p>Andrea Bustamante, Executive Director, Community Schools Jenn Blake, Executive Director, Special Education and Health Services</p>	<p>Prepared for:</p> <p>OUSD School Board Directors and Community</p>

Context

Oakland Unified School District participates in a single-district Special Education Local Plan Area, or SELPA. Currently, the SELPA provides direct services pursuant to Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for students in all OUSD public schools, a dedicated early childhood center, a community-based young adult program, homes, local hospitals, private schools, and participating charter schools.

OUSD's SELPA has approximately 6,100 eligible students and about 700 students with pending initial referrals to determine eligibility for services. Our public school TK-12 population is about 5,500 eligible students, which is approximately 16% of the student body. OUSD's students receiving Special Education services exemplify the rich diversity of our overall student population. The vast majority of our students are eligible due to mild-moderate disabilities such as Specific Learning Disabilities or Speech-Language Impairments. Just under 10% of students with IEPs have disabilities formerly classified as 'severe,' which OUSD SELPA refers to as having Extensive Support Needs (ESN).

OUSD SELPA has an active Community Advisory Committee (CAC), which is composed of parents, guardians, community members, and educators. The CAC acts as an advisory body for the SELPA, and in 2021, it raised concerns to the OUSD School Board (which is the governing body for the SELPA) specific to potential barriers and access gaps for students with disabilities related to several areas of campus enrichment and extracurricular activities. Specifically, CAC members named that they would like to investigate the extent to which students with IEPs participate in activities such as electives, field trips, organized sports, district supplemental programs (e.g. tutoring, restorative justice) and afterschool programs, and they proposed the

Students with Disabilities Access Resolution Report

development of a plan to address any access barriers present across the system. This report seeks to synthesize data regarding present levels of participation in these types of activities and programs and to recommend steps OUSD can take to ensure greater access.

Data around Access and Barriers

Survey Response Data

In preparation for this report, we created a survey that was shared with all families of students with IEPs who attend ECE-Young Adult OUSD public school programs. To date, we have received 353 responses. Given that this represents only 5.8% of all families of students with disabilities, drawing broad conclusions from the responses should be considered with some caution, but the survey yielded valuable information to inform our planning.

Families were asked about their current level of access to afterschool programming, sports, enrichment programs, and special events, to assess their interest in having their child participate in these activities, and to surface barriers and supports to facilitate greater participation. Most questions were Likert-scale questions (1 = no access or interest, 5= full access or interest), with two optional, open-ended questions at the close of the survey.

Family responses indicate:

- Most OUSD students with IEPs have quite a bit of access to or full access to experiences like arts, music and drama at school (66% of responses);
- Many students with IEPs have no access to field trips and special events, with 36% of respondents selecting the “no access at all” response;
- Most students with IEPs do not participate in the afterschool programs at their site (46% of respondents);
- Most families indicating that transportation was *not* a barrier to their child’s participation in activities (64%);
- Most families reported high levels of interest in all of these experiences or programs.
- Cultural affinity groups and restorative justice had the lowest interest of the available options.

General trends based on the amount of time a student receives Special Education service include:

- Students receiving Specialized Academic Instruction (SAI) from Special Education personnel for 1-2 hours per day or fewer were more likely to have access to afterschool programs and field trips and events than students in self-contained classrooms;
- Families of students with full-day SAI were more likely to indicate an adult aide or staff member would be required for their child to participate in afterschool programs, athletics or special events;

Asian-American and White students’ families reported feeling better informed about events and activities happening at school than Black and LatinX families, overall.

Trends based on grade level or school of attendance were unable to be analyzed due to the response rate.

Oakland Athletic League (OAL) Data

Students with Disabilities Access Resolution Report

In 2018-19, which was the last full year of data available, the Oakland Athletic League had 121 participants with IEPs, of a total participation rate of 1249 students, which is about 10% of all student participants. This is below the district's disability incidence rate of just over 16% across all grades. The majority of students with IEPs who participated in organized athletics attended Oakland Tech, Skyline and McClymonds. The vast majority of students with IEPs are eligible for Special Education due to a Specific Learning Disability or Health Impairment (83%). Only three student participants had extensive support needs.

The sports in which these students participated were diverse, with students playing football, basketball, baseball, tennis, track, volleyball, cheerleading, soccer, swim, cross country and badminton.

Afterschool Participation Data

Currently, about 14% of students in OUSD afterschool programs have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), which is only slightly below the district-wide average incidence rate of students with disabilities who have IEPs, which currently sits at just over 16%.

Within ASP enrollment, there is variance on the total number of students served and the number of students with disabilities served. By number of students enrolled, sites with a higher than average percentage of enrollment of students with IEPs include CCPA, Life Academy, McClymonds, Lincoln Elementary, Frick, West Oakland Middle and Westlake Middle, while schools with below-average enrollment include Reach, RISE, Parker, Madison Park TK-5, Grass Valley, Garfield, Elmhurst United, and Brookfield.

Our data show that most students with IEPs who participate in ASPs have mild-moderate learning disabilities or speech-language impairments (about 70% of all participants with IEPs). This largely reflects the district's overall disability incidence rates. About 9% of all students with IEPs in ASPs have Autism as their primary disability category, and another 16% have Other Health Impairments. Less represented disabilities include Emotional Disturbance and Intellectual Disabilities, though they are participating in ASPs at rates that roughly reflect their percentage of the overall population of students with disabilities.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Data

Currently, Oakland Unified School District is under monitoring by the California Department of Education related to students' access to the general education instructional setting. OUSD places almost 27% of all students with disabilities into separate setting classes for 60% of their school day or more. Our 2021-22 target for improvement relative to this element is just over 21%. The district must address this and other priority elements through the implementation of our Special Education Plan, or SEP.

Our LRE data show that students with mild-moderate disabilities are more likely to participate in general education content classes and electives than students with extensive support needs, and students in secondary grades are more likely to be included for electives like art, music and drama than students in self-contained elementary programs.

Qualitative Data

Incidental feedback from OUSD families collected during IEP meetings and CAC meetings was also used to inform this report.

Students with Disabilities Access Resolution Report

Findings and Root Causes of Barriers

Our analysis of available data surfaced several hypothesized root causes to the barriers present in our system that prevent more complete and meaningful participation of students with disabilities in enrichment and extracurricular activities. These include the following:

- **Information and Communication Needs:**
 - The communication from individual school site teams to families of students with disabilities is inconsistent. Some school sites ensure equitable communication, while families at some other sites report receiving little or inadequate communication about campus-wide activities and events;
 - Qualitative data collected from CAC meetings indicates that some families of students with IEPs feel isolated from the community in which their child attends school.
- **Training and Specialized Materials Needs:**
 - Athletic staff lack training and specialized equipment to ensure the inclusion of students with disabilities in organized sports;
 - Afterschool program staff lack training and specialized instructional materials to proactively plan for the inclusion of students with diverse disabilities and learning needs;
 - General Educators have not yet participated in any foundational professional development specific to Universal Design for Learning (UDL) or disability awareness.
- **Faculty and Operational Support Needs:**
 - Currently, professional learning and planning time at school sites are often focused on the general education program and most Special Educators do not have dedicated planning time with general education colleagues to ensure a consistent time to plan for meaningful inclusion of students with special needs;
 - At some secondary campuses, students receiving primarily self-contained Specialized Academic Instruction (SAI) face operational barriers related to general education seat capacity in elective courses.

Students with Disabilities Access Resolution Report

Current Action Items Relative to the Resolution

In the current 2021-22 school year, we have undertaken or plan to undertake the following action items to address the root causes named above.

Afterschool Programming

One area raised by the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) relative to this work was the barriers some students face attending afterschool programs (ASPs). To date, we have:

- Completed a program assessment of afterschool program enrollment relative to school day enrollment of students with IEPs;
- Built partnerships with two nonpublic agencies to provide augmented staffing to supplement afterschool programs;
- Developed a system to prioritize distribution of augmented staffing across ASPs;
- Deployed three additional support staff to afterschool programs.

This November, ASP staff will begin to receive professional development focused on Universal Design for Learning from CAST, a leader in this work. Staff will complete three asynchronous modules, followed by a live culminating experience with CAST facilitators to ask questions and apply their learning to the after school context.

The final step in our plans for afterschool programming access this year is to launch a targeted communication campaign to encourage families of students with disabilities to join ASPs with enrollment capacity remaining.

Oakland Athletic League

To address the discrepancy between OUSD's enrollment of students with IEPs and their participation in organized athletics, we intend to focus on access to middle school sports in the 2021-22 school year. This work will include:

- Communication campaign specific to middle school-aged students with disabilities to encourage attendance and participation in organized sports;
- Partnership with Adapted Physical Education (APE) specialists and athletic coaches to build skills in adapting and modifying athletics for diverse learners;
- Providing adapted sports equipment to reduce barriers to participation for students with physical or sensory disabilities.

We aim to increase the number of students with disabilities participating in organized athletics by 15% by June, 2022.

Students with Disabilities Access Resolution Report

Peer-Assisted Learning

A final strategy we will plan to implement this school year is Peer Assisted Learning Strategies, or PALS. PALS is a research-validated strategy that can be used to provide peer-based support for students with disabilities in reading, structured play, and structured communication domains. For many students, this is a less restrictive and more naturalistic way to receive support.

The work will include:

- Providing compensation and paid training in PALS for participating adult trainers;
- Selecting students to participate as peer mentors;
- Training students;
- Providing reinforcers to motivate and recognize students for their work.

This year, we will begin with a pilot of PALS across three elementary school campuses that are currently being determined. We will collect feedback from participating educators and students to determine program efficacy and impact and hope to expand this work in future years.

SwD Affinity/Community Groups

Special Education's Family Engagement Specialist will lead work centered in increasing families' feelings of connection to their school campuses by building affinity groups for students with disabilities at target campuses across our continuum. These spaces will include opportunities to build community and meet other families, strengthen relationships with site leaders, and engage in parent/caregiver learning. We aim to establish six groups this year and expand to 20 campuses by 2023.

Students with Disabilities Access Resolution Report

Recommendations for Continued Work and Investment

Based on the areas of need raised through our data analysis and in alignment with the ongoing improvement plans related to students with disabilities (i.e. Special Education Plan (SEP) and Comprehensive Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CCEIS)), we recommend the following actions be considered by the Board for future work in this area:

Site Planning and Enrollment

The equitable and proactive inclusion of students with disabilities must begin in our assignment and enrollment practices by ensuring that as many students with disabilities as possible have the same school options as non-disabled peers. Reliance on siloed “inclusion” programs at specific campuses that require students be removed from their schools of origin to access additional support--coupled with OUSD’s historical use of highly restrictive Special Day Class settings--sets a tone that students are not full members of their school campuses. The CDE-approved Special Education Plan (SEP) calls for the enrollment process to be modified to address this issue, and ***we recommend that all students with primarily inclusive services participate in the general education enrollment process by the 2023-24 school year.***

Another step related to site planning that could support the inclusion of students with disabilities would be to ***adapt the currently-adopted School Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) process*** to feature a section specific to the ways in which the campus will address academic growth and extracurricular inclusion for students with diverse learning needs, including those with disabilities.

Finally, through the family survey and qualitative data collected through IEP meetings, families of students with IEPs report that they do not consistently receive information from their school site about activities and opportunities like athletics, afterschool programming, field trips, or enrichment opportunities. ***There should be an expectation that families of students in primarily self-contained Special Education classrooms receive the same information and communication as families of typically-developing peers.***

Strategic Partnerships

OUSD relies on the partnership of local organizations and agencies to support our work. These partnerships can be reviewed to ensure that they are prepared to meet the needs of diverse learners. We recommend that the Board ***consider a requirement for all new or renewed contracts and service agreements providing direct service to students to address the ways in which the organization/agency is prepared to adapt its work to meet the needs of students with disabilities.***

Finally, OUSD should continue investment in the training and support of afterschool program personnel to ***ensure all staff receive professional development specific to Universal Design for Learning, Crisis Deescalation, and Mental Health First Aid.*** Afterschool programs should also receive adapted materials and curricula so they are prepared to accommodate for students with IEPs.

Students with Disabilities Access Resolution Report

Professional Learning and Program Investments

In order to appropriately support the needs of students with a broad spectrum of disability impacts, educators must be equipped with appropriate tools and materials. Data from the family survey indicated that the vast majority of families were interested in their child participating in electives, sports, music programs, or other supplemental activities, but some students will require specialized approaches or materials to do so. The current time held for teachers and support staff to participate in professional learning is extremely limited, with many competing priorities.

We recommend that the Board consider partnering with our labor leaders and labor unions to *expand the number of professional learning days to allow for universal training in disability awareness/disability justice, Universal Design for Learning, function-based behavior interventions, and mental health first aid*. Moreover, *we recommend that all site administrators receive training in inclusive planning principles* so they are equipped to lead master scheduling and instructional design from a lens of disability access.

Finally, while work has been done to include more students with IEPs in high school pathways, our students with disabilities remain far less likely to participate in pathways or experience a high school internship than typically-developing students. We recommend that OUSD leverage the power of Linked Learning Pathways to *build intentional career pipelines that connect OUSD students with disabilities to paid internships and career opportunities within OUSD*. Examples include skilled trades, culinary arts, Licensed Vocational Nurse certification, and warehouse and custodial roles. This could be a ‘win-win’ for OUSD and our students by facilitating employment for young adults with disabilities while building a sustainable labor base for harder-to-fill positions within our system.

Recommended Future Priorities and Investments Summarized

- ★ Enable students with inclusive services to enroll in school using the general education options process;
 - ★ Increase school-to-home communication;
 - ★ Include strategies to support students with disabilities in the SPSA;
 - ★ Require that all contracts for student services address how needs of learners with disabilities will be addressed;
 - ★ Continue professional development for afterschool staff and provide appropriate materials;
 - ★ Increase professional development days for OUSD educators to focus on UDL and disability awareness; and
 - ★ Build career pathways specific to students with disabilities through Linked Learning.
-

Students with Disabilities Access Resolution Report

We greatly appreciate the attention and care of the OUSD School Board Directors and the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) for continuing to advocate for the needs of students with disabilities. We welcome the opportunity to discuss this in more detail or answer any questions readers may have.

In Partnership,



Jenn Blake
Executive Director, Special Education



Andrea Bustamante
Executive Director, Community Schools