



**Educating Every Student for Success**

**BOARD AGENDA DETAIL**

**June 23, 2020**

**PRIORITY GOAL: Expand Student Achievement for All,  
While Reducing the Income-Based Achievement Gap**

**AGENDA ITEM: Special Education Task Force (SETF) Update**

**PURPOSE: Informational**

**DOCUMENTS: Memo-pgs. 1-2  
SETF Recommendations-pgs. 3-28**

**FROM: Rick Schulte, Superintendent  
Mandy Cathey, Executive Director of Special Education  
Tracy Blankenship, Executive Director of Special Education**



## ***Memorandum***

**Date:** June 23, 2020  
**To:** Board of Directors  
**From:** Dr. Rick Schulte  
**Subject:** Special Education Task Force (SETF) Update

I have attached the final year-end report of the Special Ed Task Force that was formed at the school board's direction at the end of the 2018 – 2019 school year. The school board has originally expected to schedule a board workshop in May or June to receive and discuss the report. Due to the COVID closure, both the final in-person meetings of the SETF were discontinued and the board workshop has been postponed. The SETF committee charge called for a final report to be submitted to the superintendent for transmittal to the school board. In addition to transmitting the report itself, I am offering some observations of my own that might deserve further attention.

- The board should schedule a board workshop on the SETF report in the fall.
- I believe the charge to the committee has been substantially completed. Future involvement by advisory groups should be considered with different formats. Use of an outside facilitator was beneficial this year, but we can't expect that to continue indefinitely.
- The number of participants on the SETF along with the varying levels of expertise, responsibility, needs, interests, concerns, and competing agendas made communication and progress difficult. My understanding is that the report submitted had a high degree of consensus among the participants; there is no dissenting or minority report.
- With an almost entirely new administrative leadership group in the special education program, it is important to clarify that the special education leadership has the authority and responsibility to proceed with implementation activities for the SETF report, including making adjustments as needed. Parent and staff advisory opportunities should be incorporated into the leadership planning.
- There are many details of the report that require further elaboration and explanation. This could happen in a variety of ways including board workshops and professional

development for staff, parents, and school board. Many will not be familiar with some of the terms and acronyms or what they mean in practice.

- What is MTSS and how does it differ from RTI?
  - What is inclusion and how is it different from inclusionary practices?
  - What is Universal Design for Learning and how is it related to inclusionary practices?
  - What does co-teaching mean?
- A few of the detailed recommendations will require scheduling and coordination with other needs and interests.
- Two days of staff development may entail a return to something like the former RTI Institutes in the summer.
  - Secondary master schedules are subject to many incompatible needs that would make some of the recommended practices impractical.
  - Checklists of inclusive practices may infringe on evaluative frameworks, criteria, and processes.
- One important recommendation that was not addressed and is likely outside the scope of the SETF is adopting and implementing a budgetary model for special education funding. I am not aware of a successful model of this sort.
- The committee charge excluded collective bargaining concerns or implications from the committee's work. The REA representative withdrew from the SETF early in the process. It's unclear what impact or interests from the report may be relevant for collective bargaining with the different bargaining groups.
- Two of the more controversial topics from the spring of 2019 had to do with the number and role of paraeducators and the meaning and application of boundary schools versus magnet programs. Those concerns have not been fully and explicitly addressed, so these could be part of the discussion at a board workshop. The specific balance among magnet and on-site programs needed to offer a continuum of services requires further investigation. This in turn could impact the number and role of paraprofessionals assigned to magnet and boundary school programs.
- The COVID-related school closures were never part of the SETF work. Nevertheless, the impact of this year's closure and any future closure must be considered moving forward.

Overall, I am pleased to present this report to the board for its consideration. The report is well done in spite of the inherent conflict and high emotions involved. I believe this establishes a positive foundation for further progress.

# **Special Education Task Force**

# **Strategic Plan**

# **2020-2024**

# **Richland School District**

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# Introduction

Richland School District has always had a strong commitment to providing quality services to our Students with Disabilities (SWD). Our community is passionate about providing the best support possible for students and supportive in working with school district staff to achieve this.

Over the last decade, a number of influential transitions have changed the way special education services were provided. These included district leadership staff changes, the implementation of a strong RtI structure and then its subsequent modifications over time, growth in the population of students with disabilities, citizen complaints and their corrective actions after more than a decade of no state complaints, and an ever-changing student population and turnover in special education teachers.

## Program Review

More recently, in response to these transitions and a recognized need to transform our special education services, the district contracted with an independent third-party, the Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative at Education Development Center, to conduct a comprehensive review of programs and services offered by the school district to students with disabilities. The district sought out the review because we want to have information and recommendations to improve special education services. The report observations and recommendations are available at <https://www.rsd.edu/media/472/richland.specedreport.2018.pdf>.

## Special Education Task Force

In an effort to ensure that all stakeholders were involved in considering the recommendations of the program review and how they may be implemented in Richland, a Special Education Task Force (SETF) committee was established. The SETF included over 30 members who were selected through an application process. The school board members selected which parents would participate. The membership included 9 voting parents with 3 participating alternates, the paraeducator union president, general education and special education district administrators, elementary, middle and high school administrators, general and special education teachers from all levels, and a community employer. The SETF became knowledgeable about the Program Review, High Leverage Practices in Special Education, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and other Inclusive Practices. After spending time learning about these aspects, the SETF members made recommendations for RSD Special Education.

## State Initiatives and Guidance

Additionally, at the state level, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has been developing a plan for improving outcomes for students with disabilities across the state of Washington. They have developed six priorities they are facilitating from their office:

- Leadership – Support students with disabilities including increased collaboration and ownership of school administrators and staff and coordinated efforts with community organizations to improve results and reduce disproportionality.
- Growth Mindset – Increased expectations of students with disabilities (e.g., standards, instruction, graduation, assessments, attendance, and IEP-related decisions, and post-school outcomes).
- Evidence-Based Practices – Instruction and interventions within an MTSS framework and inclusionary practices leading to increased access and progress in Washington grade-level learning standards.
- Professional Development – Joint training for general educators, special educators, paraeducators, administrators, and parents/families (e.g., IEP team members).
- Resource Allocation – Braided funding, consolidated grant applications, reducing costs for administrative tasks, increasing direct support to students, and data-based decision making.
- Recruitment & Retention – Preparation programs for administrators, general educators, special educators, related service providers, and paraeducators focused around instruction and support for students with disabilities.

## **Richland School District’s Strategic Goal**

Together We Educate Every Student For Success

- We manage resources in an open, accountable manner to assure sustainable value and a safe, secure, nurturing environment.
- We hire and develop highly qualified staff who will work with students, families, and the community in collaborative teams.
- We challenge students at all levels with rigorous, rich skills in reading, writing, and math along with access to a broad and deep curriculum in the arts and humanities, math and sciences, trades and technical skills.
- We support individual needs, goals, interests, cultures, skills, and abilities. We nurture well-rounded students, attending to their hopes and dreams, their concerns and challenges. We will teach the work habits, study skills, character, creativity, and attitudes needed for lifelong learning.
- We use multiple measures and evidence of outcomes of significance to set goals, implement plans for improvement, monitor progress, and celebrate success.

# **Richland School District Special Education Mission & Vision**

Together, educating every student for lifelong success.

To achieve this mission, we are committed to:

- Building a culture of inclusion with a student-first philosophy
- Maximizing the strengths and supporting the needs of every student
- Empowering students to become independent self-advocates
- Providing quality education using inclusive evidence-based practices
- Building partnerships with families and the community
- Providing maximum access to the general education curriculum through a continuum of services

## **The Special Education Department Core Beliefs**

Special education is meant to minimize the impact of disability while maximizing the opportunities for children with disabilities to participate in general education within their natural community.

Students should remain in the educational environment they would be in if they did not have a disability and removal from this environment must be justified.

Special education is a service, not a place.

# Where We Are Going

## The Purpose of Our 5-Year Plan

The Richland School District Special Education Department has received recommendations from the Urban Collaborative through a program review, as well as, recommendations from the Special Education Task Force to guide the work of this 5-year plan. The following plan is to be considered a “living document” that will develop and change based on the needs of our students, staff, and families over time. As needs change, this plan will be revised.

## Four Focus Areas of the 5 Year Plan

The Special Education Task Force (SETF) focused primarily on the following recommendations:

**Recommendation 7:** Using the MTSS process embedded with the UDL framework, improve academic outcomes for students with disabilities.

**Recommendation 8:** Special Education must go through a process to create a vision and strategic plan focused on the educational outcomes of students with disabilities and aligned to the district’s overarching focus on reducing the income-based achievement gap.

**Recommendation 9:** Ensure that there is a full continuum of services through the district, with an emphasis on inclusive practices and supports and services that provide access to both the general education curriculum and the specially designed instruction.

Those three recommendations were the emphasis of the work completed by the SETF because they provide a framework for how to improve Special Education services and supports (creating better outcomes for students) across the district. These recommendations had a higher priority for consideration by the stakeholder groups represented in the SETF than other recommendations which were narrower in scope. Additionally, because these three recommendations are related to overarching services, it allowed for most of the other recommendations to be incorporated within the improvement plans for these three recommendations.

The Special Education Task Force organized its recommendations into four major focus areas. Those areas are listed below and then each is explained in further detail in this document.

### Focus Area 1 - Instructional Practices

Special Educational staff utilize research-based evidenced practices (including inclusive practices) to guide effective educational services provided to students.

### Focus Area 2 - System and Organizational Improvements

The Special Education Department is intentional about meeting district-wide structural and communication needs to provide consistency and to minimize barriers for implementation and support.

**Focus Area 3 - Professional Development**

The Special Education Department provides quality professional development training opportunities for all staff to build their competencies and expertise levels for creating positive outcomes for students.

**Focus Area 4 - Data and Accountability**

The Special Education Department utilizes on-going data collection and analysis to determine both areas of successful program implementation and areas for continuous improvement efforts.

## Focus Area 1 – Instructional Practices

The Special Education Task Force spent a considerable amount of time exploring effective practices in Special Education. One of the practices the task force emphasized was Inclusive Practices. Some of those practices include the provision of district-wide frameworks for ALL students including the implementation of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

(Related to recommendations: 7,8,9)

### What It Looks Like

- All teachers are teachers of students with disabilities and every teacher is skilled in how to support and provide differentiated and specially-designed instruction, accommodations, modifications, and assistive technology to students with disabilities.
- Special and general education teachers engage in intentional and collaborative discussions to meet the needs of each student with a disability.
- All schools ensure a fully implemented MTSS system to provide all students with quality core instructional, behavior instruction, SEL, and the necessary additional supports.
- All teachers develop lessons that allow multiple entry points and multiple modes of engagement for students with diverse needs (Universal Design for Learning – UDL).
- All teachers are knowledgeable and skilled in providing explicit instruction in academics and social-emotional learning.
- Educators use the full continuum of services, including co-teaching, to ensure that students with disabilities are educated in the least restrictive environment at their boundary school (or school of choice) whenever possible.
- All students have access to a wide-range of assistive and adaptive technology.
- RSD provides 18-21 transition services that result in increased post-school outcomes for those students who need additional time to develop their skills in employment and independent living areas.
- Principals engage in leadership opportunities to enhance their instructional leadership skills to increase inclusion successes in their buildings.
- All students receive instruction in curriculum aligned with the State’s Learning Standards.
- IEPs are developed with standards-based goals.

## Timeline

Action Steps	2020-2021 Awareness Year (1)	2021-2022 Implementation Year (2)	2022-2023 Improvement Year (3)	2023-2024 Sustainability Year (4)	2024-2025 Sustainability Year (5)
Co-Teaching partners have common planning time in their master schedules.		X			
All elementary students receive 'specials' in general education.		X	X		
Co-Teaching as a service delivery model (some sites have been early adopters).	X	X			
Early adopters review co-teaching guidance and provide feedback prior to sharing with all staff.	X				
RSD co-teaching guidance document is shared with all staff involved in co-teaching.	X				
Establish a district Assistive Technology Team.	X				
Develop transition resources/guidance for case managers.	X				
Develop scope & sequence for transition services 9-12+ (including curriculum, IEP transition plan components, compliance requirements, HSBP).	X				
Implement transition curriculum/scope & sequence.		X			
Add certificated staff to support additional transition supports/services at the high school & 18-21 levels.	X	X	X	X	

## Focus Area 2 – System and Organizational Improvements

Systematic and organizational improvements were also a significant focus identified by the Special Education Task Force. Four primary themes that could be identified in this focus area include relationships, culture, staffing, and consistency. Specifically, the committee recommended specific actionable tasks the district could focus on that would improve relationships with stakeholders, improve cultural competence and disability awareness, align staffing to student needs, and ensure a district-wide plan that was consistent.

(Related to recommendations: 7,8,9)

### What It Looks Like

- We have a culture that includes awareness, understanding, and acceptance of students with disabilities.
- We use person-first language.
- We assume competence and have high expectations for students.
- Staff demonstrate a growth mindset.
- We cultivate parent and family dialogue and involvement.
- We offer community forums on special education topics such as inclusive practices and co-teaching.
- We ensure collaboration time for general and special education staff to work together.
- We develop student-centered IEPs.
- All students have access to resources regardless of their individual school setting.
- We employ an accountability system for inclusive practices.
- Consistency is provided across all schools.
- There is a system in place to analyze instructional materials and assessments and to make recommendations for improvements on an on-going basis.
- There is an assistive technology team of experts that work with school teams to make recommendations, provide training, and ensure access to beneficial tools and resources.
- We ensure all students have access to before and after school activities.
- The RSD Special Education Department Team Leads regularly discuss topics of high interest in the special education field and help develop the district's actions to improve student outcomes.
- Improvement and expansion of the current 18-21 program.

## Timeline

Action Steps	2020-2021 Awareness Year (1)	2021-2022 Implementation Year (2)	2022-2023 Improvement Year (3)	2023-2024 Sustainability Year (4)	2024-2025 Sustainability Year (5)
Build an understanding of why General Education and Special Education staff need to regularly collaborate and how collaboration time might be used by staff.	X				
Regular time for collaboration between General Education and Special Education staff is scheduled at each building.		X			
Regular communication is shared with the administration to develop an awareness of Inclusive Practices.	X				
Regular district-wide communication is shared with all staff to support Inclusive Practices.		X	X	X	X
Parent involvement/feedback is included in all initiative work.	X	X	X	X	X
Principals utilize the Inclusive Practices Checklists for their schools	X	X	X		
Social/Emotional and Executive Functioning SDI are focused on giving student-specific replacement behaviors/new skills they can utilize in any setting.	X	X			
Develop Paraeducator Utilization Guidance.		X	X		
Increase parent resources/information on the RSD website.	X	X			
Parent information newsletters/emails sent regularly.	X	X	X	X	X
Implement student-centered IEPs at all secondary sites.		X	X	X	X
Implement student-centered IEPs at all elementary sites.			X	X	X
Quarterly Community Forum covering current special education topics.	X	X	X	X	X

## Focus Area 3 – Professional Development

The Special Education Task Force acknowledged through its experiences that significant changes need to be made to special education service delivery in the Richland School District, and to do so, an emphasis on professional development must be made in the coming years. The professional development plan must include training for general and special education teachers, paraeducators, and administrators. This must include annual training opportunities for all staff which covers the following professional development opportunities:

- new staff training covering curriculum, technology needs, and policy and procedural practices
- training for current staff in areas such as new curriculum, technology needs, and policy and procedural changes
- building specific professional development
- professional development that includes ongoing support for implementation

(Related to recommendations: 7,8,9)

### What It Looks Like

- All teachers participate in professional development to develop expertise in specific strategies, curriculum tools, and materials to target specific student skills.
- Professional development in the areas of Inclusionary Practices and Inclusionary Mindset (differentiation, high expectations, compassion mindset, understanding WHY, disability awareness, MTSS, PBIS, SEL).
- RSD provides Universal Design for Learning (UDL) training for all staff.
- RSD provides regular professional development in co-teaching.
- Special education teachers participate in professional development to increase the use of effective supplemental supports and utilizing effective resources to maintain high levels of expectations for students with disabilities.
- All staff have the opportunity to participate in assistive and adaptive technology training.
- All staff receive professional development in the areas of Social/Emotional Learning and working with students who display challenging behaviors.
- Professional development opportunities are provided on writing effective IEPs, standards-based goals, data-collection processes, and reporting student progress.
- Principals engage in leadership opportunities to enhance their instructional leadership skills to improve the quality of highly individualized and comprehensive IEPs and the delivery of specially designed instruction.
- Principals engage in leadership opportunities to enhance their instructional leadership skills to improve special education outcomes.
- All staff are regularly surveyed to determine professional development needs.
- RSD has a detailed professional development calendar for each year along with a multi-year PD plan.
- RSD regularly assesses how classroom support teachers (and other support staff) effectively sustain professional development and instructional implementation and makes adjustments as needed.

- Staff participate in coaching cycles with both the special and general education Classroom Support Teachers (CSTs) for embedded professional development.
- Classroom Support Teachers, side-by-side coaching, and mentoring are key aspects of professional development.
- RSD offers parent training in Inclusive Practices (UDL, co-teaching, etc.).
- IDEA Project is offered at elementary schools.

## Timeline

Action Steps	2020-2021 Awareness Year (1)	2021-2022 Implementation Year (2)	2022-2023 Improvement Year (3)	2023-2024 Sustainability Year (4)	2024-2025 Sustainability Year (5)
Inclusive Practices Checklist Book Study with all administrators at monthly admin meetings.	X				
Inclusionary mindset professional development for all admin.	X				
Inclusionary mindset professional development for all staff to include general education teachers, special education teachers, and paraeducators provided at the building level.		X			
Inclusive practices professional development for all staff to include general education teachers, special education teachers, and paraeducators provided at the building level.		X	X	X	X
UDL training for all administrators (may also include early adopters at grant schools).	X				
UDL training for all staff to include general education teachers, special education teachers, and paraeducators.	X	X	X	X	X
Ongoing co-teaching all secondary schools (implemented at some sites 2018-2019). RHS is further along in the process. RHS and CMS both have an IPP grant and may choose to adopt earlier.		X	X	X	X
Initial co-teaching training at all elementary sites - small team (administrator, special education, general education teacher attend training) Tapteal has an IPP grant and may choose to adopt early.	X	X	X	X	X
Train-the-Trainer Co-Teaching - identified staff receives training to become trainers.		X	X	X	X
Embedded Co-teaching support for all co-teaching staff.				X	X

Ongoing Co-teaching training for new staff choosing to adopt a co-teaching model.			X	X	X
High-Leverage Practices training for all SpEd teachers.	X				
Assistive Technology process training for all Special Education staff.		X	X	X	X
Assistive Technology training provided to special education certificated staff.		X	X	X	X
assistive technology Equipment orientation training on a voluntary basis.		X	X	X	X
Effective use of Paraeducators training for all special education staff.		X	X		
Standards-based goal writing professional development provided to all special education certificated staff.	X	X	X	X	
ESY procedures/qualification training.	X	X	X	X	
Effective and appropriate data collection and reporting for all special education teachers.	X	X	X	X	
Transition curriculum/scope & sequence training for all SpEd teachers.		X	X	X	X
New Curriculum training (Life Skills and Transition).	X	X			
New Staff Orientation.	X	X	X	X	X
Special Education PD Institute (August) annually.		X	X	X	X
Inclusionary Practices training for parents.	X	X			
On request training for all staff that provides strategies, curriculum tools, and materials to target specific student skills.		X	X	X	X

## Focus Area 4 – Data and Accountability

Substantial emphasis was also placed on a district-wide system of data and accountability for multiple aspects of Special Education programming in the Richland School District. The Special Education Task Force identified the importance of including multiple stakeholders in the process of gathering, monitoring, and analyzing data related to system-wide programs, interventions, and effectiveness of instructional decisions for students being served in special education. Recognition was given to the importance of developing a system of checks and balances at the district level to ensure site teams are supported in their compliance efforts.

(Related to recommendations: 7,8,9)

### What It Looks Like

- The district routinely examines the opportunity and achievement gaps of students with disabilities and buildings to implement activities for improvement.
- The Special Education Department creates and conducts a three year rotating annual needs assessment of students, staff, and families.
- Progress monitoring data is collected and informs decisions about the effectiveness and/or need for modification to services.
- Educators disaggregate and analyze outcomes for students with disabilities to improve school-wide programs and interventions.
- All teachers will use formative assessment to assess students' understanding of standard(s)/goal(s) to improve and target instruction to student needs.
- General education teachers will be provided with each student's strengths and needs through the IEP process in order to facilitate and support each student to meet their potential.
- Each school will use the Inclusive Practices Checklist and will develop action plans to meet the needs of all students.
- The Special Education Compliance Coordinator will monitor IEP compliance including SDI and service minutes at the district level. Additionally, each case manager will monitor IEP compliance for their individual caseloads.
- Develop a system that is used districtwide to gather, monitor, and analyze student data for guiding Special Education program improvements.

## Timeline

Action Steps	2020-2021 Awareness Year (1)	2021-2022 Implementation Year (2)	2022-2023 Improvement Year (3)	2023-2024 Sustainability Year (4)	2024-2025 Sustainability Year (5)
Each building schedules time in August and before semester changes for General Education and Special Education staff to collaborate on specific student needs.	X	X	X	X	X
IEP team members will receive a copy of the students' accommodations and modifications when amended or revised annually.	X	X	X	X	X
Students w/Disabilities (SWD) data is monitored & goals incorporated into SIPs.	X	X	X	X	X
Annual data dig with each site to identify areas of strengths and areas for growth with regards to students being served in special education.	X	X	X	X	X
An annual needs assessment including culture, climate, and service, of students, staff, and families will be conducted on a three-year rotating basis.	X	X	X	X	X
The Special Education Compliance Coordinator will monitor IEP compliance including SDI and service minutes at the district level on an ongoing basis and provide feedback to sites.	X	X	X	X	X

# Special Education Plan Implementation

As we think about the changes that will be implemented in the years ahead, we are structuring the related activities and plans in a phased-in format that allows for training (building awareness and understanding), followed by implementation, then looking at how to improve the implemented changes, and lastly addressing how to sustain the improvements that have been implemented. While our plan was written in the format of a 5-year, district-wide plan, it is important to realize that the timing of implementation at each school site may differ. We have three school sites that have been recipients of Inclusionary Practices grants. With that grant work, it would make sense that they may be further along than other buildings. Additionally, each school is in a different place with the readiness to learn, grow, and change in practices. With regular changes such as building leadership changes (principals and assistant principals) and staff turnover, each building will need to assess their next steps for implementing change. With all of this, there is also the reality of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic currently affecting our educational system and communities at large. Given all of this, our plan is a work-in-progress and will need to be adjusted as we go.

The development of this plan through the work of our Special Education Task Force was the first step in the evolution of special education services and supports in Richland School District. The improvements will continue through detailed strategic plans that will be updated regularly as needed and through School Improvement Plans for each individual school site. These plans will be accessible on the RSD website and will be modified and updated as needed.

# Special Education Program Review

## Recommendations

### Recommendations for the District

**Recommendation 1:** Align the focus of RSD’s Special Education to the overarching vision of reducing the income-based achievement gap, providing focus and targets disaggregated by disability status.

**Recommendation 2:** The district should consider a revision of the current RTI model that could include rebranding to a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) framework that employs universal design for learning, provides all students with a meaningful opportunity to learn and options for progress monitoring, and is a problem-solving process that helps match instructional resources and focus to educational needs.

**Recommendation 3:** Develop collaborative structures across departments to support districtwide initiatives and develop supportive processes at the building level that might include co-facilitating professional learning and conducting instructional rounds.

**Recommendation 4:** Consider implementing a funding formula and processes that support a tiered approach to accessing the general education curriculum and specially designed instruction and that standardize special education budget allocations, including the use of appropriate staff.

**Recommendation 5:** Examine in detail all contractual language for areas to address professional development and the use of paraeducators with the Richland Education Association.

### Recommendations for the Special Education Department

**Recommendation 6:** Examine classification, evaluation, and placement practices to assure fidelity and track classification and educational placement data.

**Recommendation 7:** Using the MTSS process embedded with the UDL framework, improve academic outcomes for students with disabilities.

**Recommendation 8:** Special Education must go through a process to create a vision and strategic plan focused on the educational outcomes of students with disabilities and aligned to the district’s overarching focus on reducing the income-based achievement gap.

**Recommendation 9:** Ensure that there is a full continuum of services through the district, with an emphasis on inclusive practices and supports and services that provide access to both the general education curriculum and the specially designed instruction.

**Recommendation 10:** Develop IEPs with a deep understanding of disability and the possibilities of effective and inclusive individualized special education supports and services, and processes to share this information with all who work with the student.

**Recommendation 11:** Further develop systems of collaboration and provide guidance that support principals to use their expertise as instructional leaders to participate in the determination and implementation of special educational supports and services to students with disabilities in their schools.

**Recommendation 12:** Develop district guidance, processes, and systems of oversight to decide when the use of a paraprofessional is appropriate and how the paraprofessional will provide services.

**Recommendation 13:** Develop an internal working group of special education staff across all buildings levels to meet regularly with the special education central office team to work collaboratively on providing supports and services, as well as designing internal and external communication structures to increase transparency and strengthen partnerships with parents and community.

**Recommendation 14:** Provide training to ensure that special education staff are adept at providing accommodations and modifications for students to access the general education curriculum no matter their skill level and specially designed instruction to work on developing students' skills.

**Recommendation 15:** Adopt and implement district wide social-emotional standards and positive behavioral supports, with mental health supports and community partnerships, changing the perspective to look at negative behaviors as lagging skills rather than purposeful actions. In addition, repurpose all isolation rooms to use for other functions, with the ability to have some space in school for students to decompress in a safe space with structured support and options for sensory integration.

**Recommendation 16:** Develop programs, partnerships, and processes that support all students who remain in the district until the age 22, using the current effective program as a model.

**Recommendation 17:** Dedicate at least one person in special education to oversee assistive technology, including providing staff training, procurement, and inventory, and train a team of staff that can conduct evaluations for the effective use of assistive technology.

**Recommendation 18:** In keeping with the legal criteria and intent of ESY, the "likelihood of regression [and] slow recoupment" are acceptable reasons for determining that a student receive ESY and further, "showing of actual regression is not required to find a child eligible for ESY," Richland should consider including more flexibility in how ESY decisions are made.

# Special Education Task Force Committee Charge

**Background:** In the last couple of years, Richland School District (RSD) has been involved in several review systems with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). From each of these, the district has been given direction from state leadership in ways we need to improve our special education program for students.

During Spring 2016, the special education program went through the Washington Integrated System of Monitoring (WISM) review. Positive findings from that review were primarily based in the area of 'compliance.' Areas that included needs for corrective action were in the 'content' of the Individual Educational Programs (IEPs) and evaluations.

In 2017, RSD had three citizen complaints processed by OSPI in which special education service delivery was reviewed. Findings from these complaints included the following:

- Services not being provided as outlined in the IEP
- A lack of meaningful Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) being designed by the special education teacher when the service provider is another staff member
- Not offering a full continuum of service delivery options

In 2018, RSD had additional citizen complaints processed by OSPI in which special education service delivery was reviewed. Findings from these complaints included the following:

- Lacking comprehensive and appropriate post-secondary transition plans
- Accommodations not provided in all settings consistently
- Progress reports not providing adequate information and/or not being completed for each area during every reporting period

As a result of these findings, the district contracted with an independent third-party provider (Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative Education Development Center) to complete a review of our program and make recommendations. During the spring/summer 2018 RSD completed the Special Education Program Review resulting in multiple findings and 18 recommendations. These findings and recommendations necessitate changes to the district's special education program.

There are several data points for students that reinforce that our special education programs can provide better for students. This data should be considered and weigh heavily on task force committee members to keep us focused on our goal to provide improved services to students so that we produce better student outcomes. Some of that data is listed below:

- Students with disabilities continue to be suspended at a significantly higher rate than their general education peers.
- Inclusion/Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) data from November 2018 shows that only 56% of our Students with Disabilities are in the 'full inclusion' setting, another 25% in partial inclusion, and 19% in substantially separate settings.
- Students with disabilities perform at remarkably lower levels than their peers in ELA and Math assessments.
- Students with disabilities are graduating at a much lower rate than their peers.

- A large number of students are unable to attend their neighborhood school.
- Numbers of isolation and/or restraint incidents continue to exceed acceptable numbers.
- Students with disabilities graduates are accessing higher education at a lower level than state average numbers.

On April 16, 2019, the RSD School Board directed the establishment of a Special Education Task Force. The purpose of the Task Force is to develop recommendations for the School Board’s consideration to bring the Special Education program into alignment with the recommendations of the program review.

**Sponsor:** RSD Superintendent

**Lead:** Mike Hansen, Deputy Superintendent

**Purpose/Functions:** The task force is to examine the RSD’s current K-12 special education model and the findings of the program review, the WISM review, findings from the citizen complaints (redacted) and other applicable documents and data. Recommendations will be made to the superintendent regarding steps to implement the outlined changes from the program review over a multi-year period. The Task Force’s recommendations will include the necessary professional development for both general and special education teachers. It is proposed that the work of the task force be organized around four priorities, however it will be the responsibility of the task force to modify these priorities should they choose to do so:

1. Schools provide high-quality inclusive practices and activities with a continuum of supports to meet the needs of each student at every school.
2. Students with disabilities are held to high expectations and given the appropriate supports and services to meet those high expectations.
3. Special education teachers provide research-based instructional teaching and learning strategies and supports for students with disabilities.
4. High schools provide appropriate instruction for students with disabilities in career development and opportunities to participate in work-based learning.

Annually, the task force will reconvene to review the progress made in the prior academic year, report progress to the school board, and develop the following year’s detailed plan for submission to the School Board by March 1 each year.

**Jurisdiction:** All applicable state and federal law requirements, as well as all RSD policy and rules and regulations will be adhered to. Should state law, federal law, or RSD policy change, the task force will reconvene to consider necessary changes. Additionally, should OSPI develop new policy, guidance, best practices, or recommendations directly related to the work of the Special Education Task Force, members will reconvene to review and refine recommendations. Recommendations requiring additional budget support must first be submitted and approved through the Richland School District finance department and the superintendent. The Task Force will not engage in collective bargaining actions or discussions.

**Products:**

1. Special Education Task Force norms.
2. Develop data metrics and frequency to monitor changes over time.
3. Annual Task Force progress report and presentation.
4. Detailed annual plan of next step actions including communication, professional development, and program changes.

**Timetable/Deadline:**

Initial recommendations: May 30, 2020

Progress Reports: May annually

Detailed Annual Plan: March 1 annually

**Resources:**

Special Education Program Review

OSPI identified 'Issues' from Citizen Complaints

Data comparing RSD Students with Disabilities to other populations

**Membership:**

The Special Education Task Force working team will be comprised of the positions outlined below as well as a larger team that will include all interested community members (the SETF Outreach Team). The task force working team will not exceed 29 members. The Outreach Team team will be unlimited and as such the structure, time and location, of these events will change as noted in the schedule below. Individuals interested in participating on the task force working team (29 members) will complete an application.

The Richland School Board will select the 12 parent representatives (9 active members and 3 alternates) to serve on the committee following a review and analysis of all applications. A rubric will be used to determine final candidates for selection (Attachment C). Alternates will receive all agendas and minutes as well as any background information that is shared with the task force. Alternates should be prepared to attend and observe all meetings. However, alternates will not be part of the consensus process.

All other positions will be filled through appointment and approval by the superintendent and the school board. It is expected that all Task Force members regularly attend the scheduled meetings and substitutes will not be allowed. Missing 2 or more meetings will constitute replacement of the member.

**Reporting To:** RSD Superintendent

**Decision Making:** Because of the make-up of the task force, majority voting is an inappropriate decision-making strategy. Unanimous consensus is also inappropriate, as such provides one individual or one stakeholder group veto power over the rest of the group. Therefore, as a precursor to any task force discussions and recommendations, the task force will determine the consensus process and criteria.

**Additional Direction and Considerations:**

1. Recommendations must consider impact on instructional time.
2. Recommendations must consider research based best practices
3. Recommendations must address the findings and recommendations from the Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative Education Development Center's review conducted in the spring and summer of 2018.
4. Recommendations must consider the varying needs by level.
5. Recommendations must consider current and future funding.

6. Recommendations must consider applicable collective bargaining agreements.
7. Members must commit to meeting schedule (no substitutions) based on the schedule below.

**Table 1: Special Education Task Force Meeting Schedule**

Special Education Task Force Meeting Schedule				
Date	Day	Location	Time	Agenda Focus
8/15-9/13	N/A	N/A	N/A	Run Community Outreach Survey
9/19/19	Thursday	Boardroom	8:00 AM - 12:00 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop Group Norms</li> <li>● Background Knowledge               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ SPED Program Review</li> <li>○ Citizen Complaints</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Best Practices Document</li> </ul>
10/3/19	Thursday	Boardroom	3:45-5:45 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Survey Analysis</li> </ul>
10/17/19	Thursday	MWE Gym	6:00-7:30 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● SETF Outreach Team - communication/input/edits</li> </ul>
11/7/19	Thursday	Boardroom	3:45-5:45 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● TBD</li> </ul>
11/21/19	Thursday	Boardroom	3:45-5:45 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● TBD</li> </ul>
12/5/19	Thursday	MWE Gym	6:00-7:30 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● SETF Outreach Team - communication/input/edits</li> </ul>
12/19/19	Thursday	Boardroom	3:45-5:45 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● TBD</li> </ul>
1/16/20	Thursday	Boardroom	3:45-5:45 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● TBD</li> </ul>
1/30/20	Thursday	MWE Gym	6:00-7:30 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● SETF Outreach Team - communication/input/edits</li> </ul>
2/13/20	Thursday	Boardroom	3:45-5:45 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● TBD</li> </ul>
2/27/20	Thursday	Boardroom	3:45-5:45 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● TBD</li> </ul>
3/12/20	Thursday	MWE Gym	6:00-7:30 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● SETF Outreach Team - communication/input/edits</li> </ul>
3/26/20	Thursday	Boardroom	3:45-5:45 PM	CANCELED DUE TO COVID-19 CLOSURE & RESTRICTIONS
4/16/20	Thursday	Boardroom	3:45-5:45 PM	CANCELED DUE TO COVID-19 CLOSURE & RESTRICTIONS

4/30/20	Thursday	Boardroom	3:45-5:45 PM	CANCELED DUE TO COVID-19 CLOSURE & RESTRICTIONS
5/7/20	Thursday	MWE Gym	6:00-7:30 PM	CANCELED DUE TO COVID-19 CLOSURE & RESTRICTIONS
5/21/20	Thursday	Boardroom	3:45-5:45 PM	CANCELED DUE TO COVID-19 CLOSURE & RESTRICTIONS
5/30/20	N/A	N/A	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit Final Recommendations to the Superintendent</li> </ul>

**\*All parents and community members will be invited to attend the SETF Outreach Team meetings. Meeting structure, time and location is changed to provide for a larger working team. Status of the task force progress with opportunities for parent questions, input and changes will be included.**

# Special Education Task Force Members

Position	Teacher	Principal	Parent
Elementary Resource Room	1.Summer Zumini	1. Elementary Shana Broms  1. Secondary Tim Praino	1.Michael Summers 2.Myriam Bradshaw 3.Kelly Roseberg Alternate 1.Heather Castleberry
Elementary Self-Contained	1.Amanda Fish		
Middle School Resource Room	1.Renae Yecha		1. Annamarie Carlson 2.Zac Carpenter 3.April Gardner Alternate 1.Tamra Harrison
Middle School Self-Contained	1.Constance Morelock		
High School Resource Room	1.Jill Ives		
High School Self-Contained	1.Laurie Price		1.Tonya Goche 2.Eugene Nemeth 3.Craig Smith Alternate 1.Mike Stevens
General Education Elementary	1.Molly Judkins		
General Education Secondary	1.Kim Maldonado		
School Board Member	1.Rick Donahoe		
REA Board Member**	1.Ken Hayes		
Para Board Member	1.Nicki Sintay		
Assistant Superintendent	1.Brian Moore		
Special Education Administrators(s)	3.Cathey, Blankenship, Hodges		
Community Agency	1.Meg Fallows		
TLC Administrator	1.Nicole Blake		
Itinerant Staff Member	1.Rachel Carter		
<b>* SETF Outreach Team (All Parents and Community Members)</b>	<b>All parents and community members are invited to attend and provide input (see schedule)</b>		

\*\*It should be noted that following the first meeting of the SETF, the REA Board Member withdrew from the committee work, stating it was a conflict of interest.