

New recommendations

Site visits

1. **Each program (intensive support, learning support, ISES/ILS, DK) should have a meeting with a single, consistent SPED administrator, once per quarter, for an hour.**
2. The meeting should include the teaching staff (including paras) and building principal. Itinerant staff should be invited, and may attend if they are available.
3. The meeting should cover topics such as student placement changes, problem-solving for specific students, upcoming program changes, and questions from building staff.
4. There should be a running agenda provided before the meeting, which can be added to by both administrators and program staff.
5. The dates for program meetings should be set at the beginning of the year.
6. Delegating programs to specific administrators for these meetings would increase efficiency, transparency, and mutual accountability.

Special Education newsletter

1. Each newsletter should begin with a table of contents, and should have a consistent format.
2. The newsletter should include a calendar and critical task deadlines. [Critical Task Calendar Example](#)
3. New information should be listed first, and identified as new using both text and formatting cues.
4. **Newsletters should not include procedural information or action items for specific groups of staff. Procedures should be included in a procedural handbook, or emailed out as necessary.**
5. Building principals should receive the newsletter.
6. The newsletter should be sent on a consistent schedule, once per month.
7. A summary digest should be provided for the year.

SPED review: Communication recommendations

Updated 4/17/24

Student Roll-ups and placement changes

1. Mid-year placement changes should be made with communication from the sending to the receiving school. Administration are aware of placement change requests and receiving building teams should be 'at the table' with a sending school to talk programming and next steps and a mutual timeline developed.
2. This process needs to begin in February, and have a clear procedural timeline. Information should be shared with every building, and communicated to all relevant staff members, including paras.
3. The spring roll-up meetings should be reinstated. The building connection meetings ([24-25 Roll-up memo](#)) were not successful at providing the needed communication to appropriately place students. The process should not be optional, and it should not be only done by the department chair.
4. New families should be invited to attend beginning of school events, when moving between schools or programs (related to spring roll-up process).
5. There should be an email address for parents to ask questions over the summer about who will be their student's case manager or other school questions. This should be monitored by an administrator in student services.
6. Itinerant staff changes should be communicated by June. Changes that happen over the summer should be communicated as soon as they are known.

Emails/phone calls

1. Staff should receive a response to emails or phone calls within 48 hours. (current practice)
 2. **If an answer or solution is not available within 48 hours, administrators should provide a timeline for receiving an answer or solution.**
 3. The BCC function should be used for emails sent to large groups of staff. BCC should not be used for emails to smaller groups of staff, especially when discussion may be anticipated.
-

SPED review: Communication recommendations

Updated 4/17/24

Current practices which should be continued (taken from [study session 2/27/24](#))

Itinerant staff leadership meetings

ISP Leadership Team Meetings: meet with administrators 1-2 times monthly to determine the agenda and focus of the larger department meeting (this has been practice for several years) (slide 11)

- Regular meetings with itinerant leadership teams support timely, bi-directional communication
- It is not necessary for both a manager and a director to attend each itinerant leadership meeting - a single administrator could be designated for each team to increase efficiency.

Itinerant staff team meetings

ISP teams meet monthly with the Itinerant Services Director and Manager to discuss topics related to their professional scope and practice as well as district initiatives. (slide 11)

Retreats specific to their roles in the district to engage in team and relationship building activities for the 24-25 school year. (slide 11)

- Regular itinerant staff meetings (2 hours/month) should be continued. These meetings are in place of the Wednesday administrator staff meetings held at physical buildings 2x/month.
- The psych retreat which was scheduled for the beginning of the 23-24 school year was canceled without prior notice.

Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) for Parents/Guardians

reinstated in January 2024 with meetings every month (slide 13)

SPED review: Communication recommendations

Updated 4/17/24

- This work has begun and is continuing. It will include parents, community leaders, students, and some ESD staff.

Emails/phone calls

Directors and Managers return phone calls and emails within 48 hours of receipt (communicated Spring 2022) (slide 15)

- This is a good recommendation, but still may result in a cursory reply (example: “I’ll get back to you about that when I know more”) which then gets no follow-up or closure.
- Recommendation: if a solution or answer is not provided within 48 hours, administrators should respond with a timeframe for when an answer or solution can be expected.

Attending complex IEP/evaluation meetings

Student Services Directors and Managers attend multiple evaluation feedback and IEP meetings on a daily basis...Administrators hold one day a week open to serve as District Representatives (DRs) in conferences as needed (slide 14)

- This has improved during the 23-24 school year. Administrators have been more available when they were needed to attend IEP team meetings for students with complex needs.

Job-Alike meetings (teachers)

Teaching Program Administrators co-plan district wide Professional Development with other departments and plan the Job Alike section for special education teachers (October 20th and May 24th)... Sped Administrators plan full day of Professional Development in August and a Job Alike in January (½ day) specifically for Special Education teachers (slide 16)

- Job-alike meetings are an important part of ongoing special education teacher training.
- Including teacher requests and feedback for topics would continue to improve this aspect.

Current practices which are not helpful (taken from [study session 2/27/24](#))

Site visits (current format)

Monthly set times to meet with the Building Administrator for each school and attending Special Education school team meetings (slide 13)

- Meeting with the building principal, without the program staff present or involved, isn't improving communication.
- **Program staff still do not have regular face-time with their SPED administrator.**
- Regular meetings with the program staff (including paras and principals) would be much more useful.

Special Education Newsletter (current format)

Special Education Newsletter increased from twice monthly to weekly in the 23-24 school year and platform moved to ParentSquare to allow for various methods of delivery (email and text) and for better accessibility. (slides 11-12)

1. The SPED newsletter does not come out weekly. It comes out inconsistently, 1-4 times per month.
 - a. September 3x, October 3x, November 1x, December 1x, January 2x, February 2x, March 3x.
2. The format is long and confusing (6-9 pages of printed text).
 - a. Paras report that it is too long to read during their limited time available for checking emails.
 - b. Teachers report that there is so much information, only some of which is relevant to them, that they often do not read it at all.
 - c. The length and lack of clear formatting make it inaccessible to folks who are neurodivergent or have difficulty processing large blocks of text.
 - d. The newsletter does not have a table of contents, or use formatting to identify the difference between new information and repeated information.

SPED review: Communication recommendations

Updated 4/17/24

- e. The newsletter is longer than what is viewable in a standard email, resulting in the end of the newsletter getting cut off.
 - f. The newsletter is cluttered with repeated procedural links and instructions, which ought to be included in a procedural handbook.
3. It is not possible to easily search through the newsletters to find information that was sent in the past (using Ctrl+F). Each newsletter has to be opened and searched individually in order to find prior information.
 - a. This makes information shared via newsletter inaccessible to staff members who have difficulty with detailed short-term memory.
 4. Action items and procedural information for specific groups are sometimes included. These important pieces of information are placed inconsistently throughout the newsletter, and not identified via formatting as having a different level of significance than routine announcements.
 - a. When action items are sent multiple times, it makes it difficult for staff to track whether they have completed the action.
 - b. When procedures are sent in a newsletter format, it makes it difficult for staff to reference that information at a later date.
 - c. When important information is only sometimes included in the newsletter, is randomly placed throughout, and is not identified as important using text and formatting cues, it is easily missed.

Office hours

Directors and Managers have weekly Office Hours- Teaching and Itinerant (slide 13)

- 1. Office hours are not helpful to improve communication.**
2. When office hours are the same time each week, there are many staff who cannot access them due to their schedule. When office hours vary, it is difficult to predict when they will happen in order for staff to plan to attend.
3. Staff need to sign up for office hours 2-3 weeks in advance in order to meet with their administrator. This does not provide timely access to administrative support.

SPED review: Communication recommendations

Updated 4/17/24

4. The process to sign up for office hours is not available. Staff do not know when or how they can sign up for office hours.
5. **Scheduling regular meetings with program teams is a more effective and efficient way to improve communication than offering office hours for individual conversations.**