PASADENA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
2024-2025 DEPARTMENT PLAN

Department Name: Special Education

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Department Purpose

What does the department do?

Provide services to students with disabilities based on their IEPS.

Department Services

What is a general list of services that your department provides?

The special education department provides services to students with disabilities who have an IEP in the least restrictive environment.

Total Department Budget

What is your department's total budget?

The total department budget is 81,565,000.

Note:

Special education is driven by State and Federal compliance mandates and Education Codes (EC) to ensure students with disabilities can access their education.

Prior Year Reflection

This section of the department plan reviews the intent of prior department plans and the successes/challenges encountered while implementing the planned actions. This portion of the plan summarizes key learnings that inform the planning for the current year.

Prior Year Intended Outcomes

What did your department plan set out to achieve during the prior year?

Facilitated IEP training was conducted in June 2023, with special education staff participating in both MTSS and district-wide leadership meetings. Additionally, a full-time equivalent (FTE) position was created for a dedicated MTSS support person. The district has collaborated with this new MTSS support staff to identify areas where additional support is needed.

Prior Year Achievement

Did the department achieve what it had outlined? How do you know?

Facilitated IEPs have been implemented, but there is still room for growth. The special education team is working collaboratively to ensure that areas of significant disproportionality are being addressed. This will continue to be a focus over the next 27 months. The MTSS framework has been initiated, and with the hiring of a full-time equivalent (FTE) position, the district is working to proactively reduce the over-identification of white students in non-public schools, as well as to better support African American students who are facing suspensions.

Prior Year Successes, Challenges, and Learnings

What successes, challenges, and learnings should be highlighted from the prior year?

The team recognized the need to complete IEPs promptly and has implemented a system to efficiently track Independent Educational Evaluations (IEEs), Requests for Services (RFS), and settlement agreements. Challenges remain, particularly regarding the significant disproportionality we are addressing as outlined above.

Current Year Priorities

This section of the department plan provides a summary of the identified needs that are prioritized for informing the department plan's actions for the current year.

Data and Information Used for Plan Development

What data did you consider when developing this plan?

Previous years data on LRE rate, CA School Dashboard, OAH filings, parent and staff input survey and meetings, state indicators, and IEP compliance

Stakeholder Engagement/Input

What stakeholder engagement or information was used to inform this plan?

The plan will incorporate data from LRE indicators, compliance indicators, and feedback from parents and staff. Additionally, it will consider findings from several reports conducted between December 2019 and December 2023, including those by The Urban Collaborative and Stetson & Associates, which focus on evaluating special education practices and outcomes.

Pasadena Unified School District (PUSD) engaged The Urban Collaborative and Stetson & Associates to assess program structures at three sites—Focus Point Academy, Altadena Elementary Arts Magnet, and Eliot Middle School Arts Magnet—each selected for unique evaluation purposes. The ASI team later reviewed these evaluations to identify opportunities for district-wide alignment to improve outcomes for students with disabilities (SWD). Furthermore, the Ascendancy Team analyzed these reports in alignment with ASI findings, based on site visits conducted in January and February 2024, as well as a Special Education Program Review completed on September 5, 2024, which outlined additional areas of need.

Key Data Findings/Information for This Plan

Based on data analysis and stakeholder information, what key data findings are considered in the development of this plan?

The plan will incorporate data from LRE indicators, compliance indicators, and input from parents and staff, as well as insights from recent evaluations, including reports by The Urban Collaborative and Stetson & Associates. Both reports focus on assessing special education practices and outcomes.

These evaluations were subsequently reviewed by the ASI team to identify

alignment opportunities aimed at improving district systems and outcomes for students with disabilities (SWD). The Ascendancy Team also examined these reports to pinpoint areas of ongoing need and alignment with ASI's findings. This review was informed by site visits conducted in January and February 2024, as well as a Special Education Program Review completed on September 5, 2024, which outlined additional areas requiring attention.

Current Plan Priorities

Based on the key data findings, what needs emerged from your Department's root cause analysis, and which of these needs are given priority for this planning cycle?

The district needs to continue its efforts to increase access to the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and to strengthen the IEP process. We must also address areas of significant disproportionality. To tackle this, the team has targeted elementary schools, focusing on grades 1–3, to implement proactive supports that address factors contributing to disproportionality. This initiative will be carried out over a 27-month period.

The department is prioritizing LRE and access for students to non-disabled peers. The district is in the process of developing a Continuous Improvement Plan (CIM) for Significant Disproportionality Plan to address this IDEA sanctions and to get to the root cause by proactively implementing support to the students early on.

Current Year Planned Actions and Metrics

This section of the department plan provides a summary of the planned actions that address the identified priorities based on data analysis and stakeholder input. Metrics associated with monitoring and/or evaluating the effectiveness of the planned actions are summarized in this section.

What action could you take to address the identified needs of your department?

What would you be able to monitor throughout the year (quarterly or more than twice per year) to know that your actions are creating a change?

Theory Of Action

If we...

1. The special education department is creating special education office hours,
2. Engaging in educational partnerships across all departments to address Sig Dispro.
3. Increased IEP training as well as Professional Development for staff.
4.Working in partnership with CAC to address areas of need for the special education.

and

Working across all departments for cross collaboration.

then...

1. parents and staff members will get increased access to Special Education team members at the central office

2. xxxx

3. teachers will be better prepared to implement accommodations and services documented in IEPs

4. central office staff, parents/caregivers of students with IEPs, and the broader special education community will develop trust, communication, and understanding across all individuals

and

We aim to ensure consistency with the curriculum for all students; however, there is currently overspending on new curriculum resources that are not being implemented effectively.

which will...

Strengthen Collaborative Structures

If we...

1. Develop and distribute cultural competency checklists for SSTs, school psychologists, and IEP teams.

2. Conduct training sessions for teachers and BCBAs on implementing the social-emotional curriculum effectively.

and

Conduct a review of the current curriculum and its implementation across all classrooms. Evaluate intervention strategies and establish processes for tracking and monitoring their effectiveness.

and

Making sure that what we ordered is effective.

then...

monitor checklists coupled with professional development which will result in

and

to ensure that IEPS are developed to ensure educational benefit as well as

and

	practices will better alight to support students/staff
which will...	Consistent use of Curriculum and Supplemental Materials

If we...	Increase training for new teachers on the Least Restrictive Environment mandate of IDEA.
then...	office hours at DO for training to provide needed supports to teachers/staff in addition to PD days
which will...	Focus on Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and evidence based practices that support students in the LRE

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If we...	Facilitated IEP training with administrators/teachers by proviiding ongoing professional development.
then...	
which will...	Compliance: Strengthen the IEP process

If we...	Professional development on going basis
then...	
which will...	Professional development on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and coaching

If we...	If all students are gen ed students first then making sure we have same curriculum for classrooms and same curriculum for ALL students that need supplementary support.

then...	we have data to ensure equity for all
which will...	Consistent Specialized Academic Instruction across all grade levels and school site

If we...	A tracking system has been identified to ensure close monitoring of classroom staffing.
then...	will be consistent with our curriculum so that it meets the needs of all students
which will...	Develop structures and staffing models to ensure consistent and transparent allocations and personnel assignments

If we...	Tracking and monitoring data consistently is crucial for effectively supporting student needs, especially in special education.
then...	we can avoid overspending and ordering unnecessary items
which will...	Lack of Available Data

If we...	
	and
	and
then...	this will help us be more efficient in identifying and targeting areas of need

and

aligning practices to

and

We ensure that we are being proactive in meeting needs by effectively monitoring our progress.

which will...

Priority 1: Strengthen Collaborative Structures

[Action 1]

1. The special education department is creating special education office hours,
2. Engaging in educational partnerships across all departments to address Sig Dispro.
3. Increased IEP training as well as Professional Development for staff.
4.Working in partnership with CAC to address areas of need for the special education.

Metrics

a. The special education department will monitor meeting dates and attendance
b. feedback from stakeholders to identify areas of need as it relates to Sig Dispor
c. the number of parents/caregivers who consent to an IEP within two weeks of a finalized meeting

[Action 2]

Working across all departments for cross collaboration.

Metrics

a. Regalar meeting with a plan to address the needs with an intended outcome.

Priority 2: Consistent use of Curriculum and Supplemental Materials

[Action 1]

1. Develop and distribute cultural competency checklists for SSTs, school psychologists, and IEP teams.

2. Conduct training sessions for teachers and BCBAs on implementing the social-emotional curriculum effectively.

Metrics

a. dates and attendance for SEL training programs
b. suspensions

c. grade distributions paired with students SEL levels
d. individual student panorama SEL inventory results. Ensure that each site has equal access. Review of sites and talking with stakeholders at sites

[Action 2]

Conduct a review of the current curriculum and its implementation across all classrooms. Evaluate intervention strategies and establish processes for tracking and monitoring their effectiveness.

Metrics

a. Regular monitoring of intervention progress at routine intervals is essential to determine if students are making adequate gains.

[Action 3]

Making sure that what we ordered is being effective.

Metrics

a. Training on program, implement to fidelity and oversight.

Priority 3: Focus on Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and evidence based practices that support students in the LRE

[Action 1]

Increase training for new teachers on the Least Restrictive Environment mandate of IDEA.

Metrics

a. CALPADS LRE percentages
b. the percentage of students with IEPs placed in SDC classrooms by site
c. the percentage of students with IEPs at each school site who are "mainstreamed" out of SDC classes

Priority 4: Compliance: Strengthen the IEP process

[Action 1]

Facilitated IEP training with administrators/teachers by providing ongoing professional development.

Metrics

a. Monitor the completion status of IEPs, focusing on tracking unsigned and overdue documents. Establish office hours at the District Office to provide training on writing legally defensible IEPs.

   Provide coaching for all staff by attending at least one IEP meeting led by each teacher and school psychologist, offering constructive feedback to enhance IEP facilitation.

Priority 5: Professional development on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and coaching

[Action 1]

Professional development on going basis

Metrics

a. Increase classroom observations with relevant feedback to support continuous growth. Provide training on Goalbook and Present Levels to ensure accurate capture of students' current performance and to develop IEP goals that effectively support student progress.

Priority 6: Consistent Specialized Academic Instruction across all grade levels and school site

[Action 1]

If all students are gen ed students first then making sure we have same curriculum for classrooms and same curriculum for ALL students that need supplementary support.

Metrics

a. The monitoring of progress on interventions at regular intervals at routine intervals is necessary to determine if students are making progress.

Priority 7: Develop structures and staffing models to ensure consistent and transparent allocations and personnel assignments

[Action 1]

A tracking system has been identified to ensure close monitoring of classroom staffing.

Metrics

a. Develop staffing ratios that align with best practices, ensuring they are reasonable and sustainable. Continuously monitor and proactively prevent exceeding these intended ratios.

Priority 8: Lack of Available Data

[Action 1]

Tracking and monitoring data consistently is crucial for effectively supporting student needs, especially in special education.

Metrics

a. Student Study Team Data
b. Office Referrals
c. Suspensions Report with Reason and In/Out of School Suspensions