



LAGUNA BEACH  
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Special Education Services Update

February 13, 2025

# Presentation Topics:

- Key Law Governing Special Education
- Legal Requirements
- Special Education in LBUUSD
- The IEP Development Process
- Resolving Special Education Disagreements
- Role of our Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA)
- Department Highlights
- Parent Mentor Program Components
- Future Planning



# Key Law Governing Special Education

- **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**
  - Obligation to offer **Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)** in the **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)** for eligible students.
  - Requires the development of **Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)** tailored to students' needs.
  - Establishes **procedural safeguards** to ensure families have access to the information needed to participate in decision-making, dispute resolutions, and due process.

## Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Special education and related services:

- Are provided at public expense—without charge to the parent or guardian.
- Meet the standards of the State of California and IDEA.
- Include an appropriate preschool, elementary, or secondary education in the state.
- Are provided in conformity with the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

# Legal Requirements

## Search & Serve

- Child Find Activities
- Student Study Team Meeting
- Procedural Safeguards

## Evaluation

- Eligibility
- Unique need identification

## Development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP)

- Service Options
- Ongoing Review Meetings
- Triennial Assessment

## Program options based on the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) principle

### General Education

### General Education with Specialized Academic Instruction

### Special Classes

### Special Classes outside of the District

- SELPA Programs
- County Programs
- Non Public School Programs
- Residential Treatment Center Programs

### Adult Transition Programs

# Special Education in LBUSD

## How Many Students Receive Services?

**10%**

of students receive special education services under an IEP

**64%**

of students receive 80% or more of their services in the general education setting

## Eligibility Categories

1. **Autism (AUT)**
2. **Deaf-Blindness (DB)**
3. **Deafness (DHH)**
4. **Emotional Disability (ED)**
5. **Hearing Impairment (HI)**
6. **Intellectual Disability (ID)**
7. **Multiple Disabilities (MD)**
8. **Orthopedic Impairment (OI)**
9. **Other Health Impairment (OHI)**
10. **Specific Learning Disability (SLD)**
11. **Speech or Language Impairment (SLI)**
12. **Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)**
13. **Visual Impairment (VI) (Including Blindness)**

# Special Education Service Delivery Models

## Education Specialist Consultation

- SPED teacher consults with the General Ed teacher, who delivers instruction and manages accommodations

## Small Group or Individual Instruction

- Research-based methods are used to address need areas which may occur within the school day but may also be offered before and after school

## Aide-Supported Classes

- General Ed teacher provides instruction, while an aide offers individualized support and helps implement accommodations

## Co-Teaching

- Blends content expertise (General Ed) with an expert in differentiation (Special Education) through a shared teaching approach

## Self-Contained Class

- Provides specialized instruction in a small setting by a special education teacher

## Outside of District Programs

- Specialized services for students with more significant needs in an alternate setting (i.e., SELPA program, County program, Nonpublic Day School, and Residential Programs)

## Related Services

Provided as needed to support student access to special education:

- Transportation
- Speech & language therapy
- Audiology & interpreting services
- Psychological & Counseling services
- Physical & Occupational therapy
- Therapeutic recreation
- Orientation & mobility support
- School health & nursing
- Social work services

The IEP team, including parents, determines appropriate services based on student's identified unique needs.

# IEP Development Process

- Preparation of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) to include:
  - Present levels of academic achievement and functional performance
  - Measurable annual goals
  - Special education services, related services, and supports
  - Accommodations and modifications
  - Placement in the least restrictive environment (LRE)
  - Transition plan (beginning when student starts HS)
- Obtain Parent Consent
- Implement IEP
- Monitor progress
- Review and revise the IEP annually at a minimum
- Re-evaluate every 3 years

## Who are the members of the IEP Team ?

- Parents/Guardians
- General education teacher
- Special education teacher
- Service providers
- School district representative (who can commit resources)
- An individual who can interpret evaluation results (e.g., school psychologist)
- The student (when appropriate)

# Determining Educational Setting

## Factors to consider:

- Students unique needs
- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
- Evaluation data & assessments
- Parent & student input
- Special factors to include but not limited to behavior, English Learner (EL) needs, assistive technology, health needs
- Goals
- Related services
- Supplementary aids and services
- Previous interventions & response to supports

**34 CFR 300.115** requires each public agency to ensure that a continuum of alternative placements is available to meet the needs of children with disabilities for special education and related services.

## When Might the IEP Team Consider an Out-of-District Placement?

- Lack of appropriate services or supports
- Severe or complex disabilities
- Safety concerns
- Lack of academic progress
- Need for a therapeutic environment
- Legal or due process considerations



### IEP Meetings

- Meeting to address parent disagreements
- May include District Director, Program Specialist or other specialist to assist with addressing parent concerns

### Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

- Parent Mentor Support
- Facilitated IEP Meetings
- ADR Meeting led by SELPA Director
- Settlement Agreement negotiations

### Due Process Filing and Formal Mediation

- Resolution Session
- Involves an Administrative Law Judge
- Parties are most often represented by legal counsel

### State Complaints

- Parents initiate a filing with the State Department of Education

## Resolving Special Education Disagreements

*Parents have a variety of procedural protections they can invoke when they disagree with educational placement.*

# Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA)

*A regional consortium that ensures special education services are effectively provided to students with disabilities. Each SELPA coordinates, funds, and implements programs across multiple districts and charter schools within a geographic region.*

- **Student Programming Support:** Supports appropriate placement and services decisions.
- **Community Engagement:** Facilitates Community Advisory Committee (CAC)
- **Case management** for students in nonpublic schools and Saddleback Valley and Capistrano Unified School District programs, except RTC placements.
- **Program Support:** Assists with special education development and implementation.
- **Training & Development:** Provides workshops for educators and parents.
- **Interagency Coordination:** Collaborates with agencies for student support.
- **Program Monitoring:** Evaluates and enhances special education services.
- **Dispute Resolution:** Aids in mediation between families and district as requested.
- **Financial Support:** Manages special education funding and grants.

# Department Highlights

- **Comprehensive evaluation practices** aligned with IDEA principles
- **Compliance monitoring** to ensure best practices
- **Lead Instructional Assistant** at each site
- **Instructional Assistant PLC meetings** for collaboration and development
- **CPI & De-escalation training** for staff
- **Certification of providers** as Dyslexia experts
- **Individualized student focus** on skill proficiency and growth
- **Strong parent involvement** through the Parent Mentor Program
- Co-teach options in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math at secondary level
- Parent Survey

## Elementary

- CODE Intervention for students with Dyslexia
- Read-to-Succeed After School Programs

## Secondary

- Zero-period intervention at the Thurston Middle School
- Peer Mentor Program

# Parent Mentor Program Components

*A support network that connects parents navigating special education to experienced mentors who provide guidance, emotional support, and help resolve concerns before they escalate into disputes.*



LAGUNA BEACH  
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Family Outreach & Mentor Connections

- Outreach brochures with QR Code for organizational items
- Mentor Connections
- Letters to new families with eligible students with program brochure
- Letters to families who move into District with program brochure
- New Parent Meetings
- Parent Support Meeting - Connection with the ECE group (NEW)
- Peer Mentor Program (NEW)

## Community Engagement & Inclusive Events

- Boo Blast & BONANZA Chill Zone Spaces
- PTA Involvement/Representative
- Parent Education

## Sub-Committee Work

- Compliance Improvement Monitoring (CIM) District Team
- LCAP
- Inclusive Education Subcommittee

# Future Planning

- Determining additional staffing need for our Occupational Therapy program.
- Ongoing support for Special Education teachers as IEP compliance demands increase.
- Exploring a regionalized program at the middle and high school levels for students with moderate needs.
- Expanding efforts to strengthen MTSS behavior supports.
- Considering a math intervention course for the 2025-26 school year.
- Ongoing focus on our outside of school interventions.



**LAGUNA BEACH**  
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Upcoming Special Education Policy & Program Changes

- New Requirements for the Individualized Transition Plan (ITP)
- Service Tracker rollout 2025-26
- Potential Change to State IEP Template

Special Education Services  
Board of Education Update  
February 13, 2025

**Thank you.**  
Questions/Comments?



LAGUNA BEACH  
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT