

THE LEARNING BEACON

March Happenings

March 2- 3:

Para Foundations & CPI

March 2-31:

6th Grade Transition Meetings
at 6th Grade Sites

March 6 & 23: SENTS Training

March 25:

New Teacher Support
Training

March 26: Extensive Needs Prom
Kimball High School

Universal Supports:

Can AI Tools Enhance how we Support Students with Disabilities?

Artificial intelligence is transforming modern society in countless ways. Businesses are integrating AI into their workflows to improve efficiency, and AI-powered customer service tools are offering faster, more responsive support. Across industries, technology is reshaping how people access and interact with information.

Educators are also exploring the potential of AI to enhance teaching and learning. While using multiple modalities to support students with disabilities is not new, AI is significantly expanding educators' ability to deliver information in varied and accessible formats.

In this issue of the Learning Beacon, many articles include links to alternative, AI-generated formats. We encourage you to explore these options and consider whether the alternate presentations are helpful for you or for the students you support. After trying them out, please take a moment to complete the short survey and share your experience with the tools.

Go to page 7 to complete the AI Tools survey.

Local Solutions:

TUSD is Hard at Work Recruiting

Over the past month, HR, Special Education, Site Administrators, and other TUSD departments have actively participated in four job fairs. On February 19, the Special Education team represented TUSD at the University of the Pacific Job Fair, discussing current vacancies and promoting district opportunities. HR attended the Stanislaus State Job Fair on February 21, where they interviewed candidates and extended several job offers.

TUSD also hosted a highly successful job fair on February 28, drawing strong interest from prospective employees. Most recently, on March 14, HR and Special Education staff participated in the Teachers College of San Joaquin County Job Fair.

Thanks to these efforts, many new staff members will soon be joining TUSD—either in the coming weeks or for the 2026–2027 school year. .

Listen to an AI generated Latin Pop version of this from Lyria: [Job Fairs](#)



AI generated image

Clear Written Offer of FAPE: Why Should Students with Disabilities be Included in Regular Education Classes?

A Federal and state laws require that students with disabilities be educated in general education settings to the maximum extent appropriate. Under the IDEA, this principle—known as the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)—establishes that students should not be removed from regular classes unless their needs cannot be met there, even with appropriate supports. In California, guidance on how to apply this law comes from an important special education case from the 1990s.

This case established what is commonly known as the “Rachel H. Test,” a four-part analysis used by IEP teams when making placement decisions. The test asks:

1. Will the student receive educational benefit from the general education classroom?
2. Will the student gain non-academic benefits, such as social interaction with peers?
3. What impact will the student’s presence have on the teacher and other students?
4. Are the costs of supporting the student in the general education setting significantly greater than providing services in a separate classroom?

These considerations help teams determine whether a general education placement is appropriate. The “Rachel H. Test” is widely referenced by judges, attorneys, advocates, and special education experts when resolving placement disputes.

Learn more about the “Rachel H. Test” through this Google Gemini Storybook creation.

[The Light of the Holland Test](#)

Spotlight on Inclusion: Waverly Learning Center Visit



AI Image using Gemini

In preparation for our transition to learning centers, our team visited the outstanding program at Waverly School in the Linden School District. Waverly has implemented a fully inclusive model that operates without a traditional SDC structure. Instead, they provide both push in and pull out supports for all students through their general education learning center.

During our visit, we were inspired to see students with disabilities fully included in general education classes. We even had the chance to observe a science class where students were dissecting rats—an engaging experience shared by everyone together. When walking into classrooms, it was impossible to distinguish which students or staff were considered “Special Education” or “General Education”; everyone collaborated seamlessly as one unified team.

We are incredibly grateful for Waverly’s hospitality and openness in sharing their practices. The visit left us hopeful and excited about the future of inclusion in TUSD as we move forward with our own learning center model.

Clear Written Offer of FAPE: Extended School Year Updates

ESY Enrollment Data will be exclusively maintained in SEIS:

- The ESY IEP discussion can occur during the Annual review or via Amendment.

Please check the Extended School Year (ESY) 2026 list.

- If you find that a student that should be coded as eligible is not included on the “Extended School Year (ESY) 2026” list, please hold an amendment for that student and make the change in SEIS.
- If you find that a student is erroneously included on the “Extended School Year (ESY) 2026” list, please hold an amendment for that student and made the change in SEIS.”

2026 ESY Dates and information:

Student ESY Attendance Dates: June 5 - July 2, 2026

Holiday: 6.19.2026

Hours: Preschool Students: 8:00 A.M.-11:00 A.M.

Hours TK-12 & TYAP Students: 8:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.

Location: Pre-K-8 ESY Villa

Location: 9-12 ESY THS

Location: TYAP ESY TISC

Teacher Prep: June 3, 2026: Teacher Training Day & June 4, 2026: Teacher Prep Day (No Students)

TRACY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR

If you find that a student that should be coded as eligible is not included on the “Extended School Year (ESY) 2026” list, please hold an amendment for that student and make the change in SEIS.

If you find that a student is erroneously included on the “Extended School Year (ESY) 2026” list, please hold an amendment for that student and make the change in SEIS.

2025-2026 ESY DATES

Student ESY Attendance Dates June 5 – July 2, 2026	
Holiday 6.19.2026	Hours Preschool Students 8:00 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.
Pre-K-8 ESY Villalovoz	9-12 ESY Tracy High School
Teacher Prep June 3, 2026 Teacher Training Day June 4, 2026 Teacher Prep Day	Teacher Prep Day (No Students)

[AI Generated Infographic](#)

[The ESY Song](#)

Local Solutions: Informed K-12 for ESY Student Registration

Parents will receive instructions on how to use the platform to enroll their child in TUSD’s ESY program. Informed K12 will help TUSD collect required enrollment information, track registration progress, and share relevant updates with parents and district departments throughout the enrollment period. If parents have questions about ESY enrollment, please remind them to check their email regularly for important information.

Clear Written Offer of FAPE:

The 2026-27 Special Education Program Resource Guides are Here

Since Spring 2024, the Special Education Department has been working closely with special education and general education teachers, administrators, and counseling staff to strengthen TUSD's special education programs and better meet the needs of students and educators. Throughout this process, we carefully reviewed teacher priorities, as well as feedback from parents, students, and other stakeholders.

As a result of this collaborative work, TUSD will launch two new inclusion programs this fall: Collaborative Teaching and Learning Centers.

Collaborative Teaching builds on TUSD's PLC model to support more effective teacher collaboration and inclusive practices.

Learning Centers provide coordinated support in which special educators and general educators work together to address individual learning needs. Students will receive targeted assistance in reading, math, and social emotional learning through aligned intervention systems.

For more information about these programs, please refer to the 2026-27 Special Education Program Resource Guides.

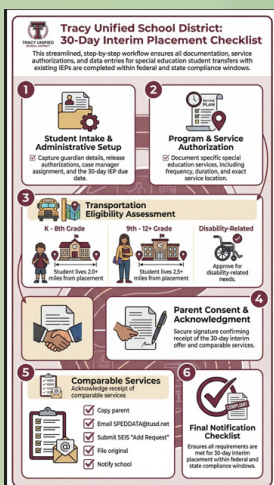
HS Sp.Ed. Programs Guide: [26-27 Special Education Program Resource Guide - HS Version](#)

K-8 Sp.Ed. Programs Guide: [26-27 Special Education Program Resource Guide for Staff - K-8 Version](#)

See an AI generated Summary and Infographic Here: [K-8 SpEd Programs AI Summary and Infographic](#)

Thank you to all the dedicated staff who contributed their time, expertise, and commitment to developing these programs in support of our school community!

Clear Written Offer of FAPE: Interim Placements



[Visual Checklist generated using Google Notebook LM](#)

The Special Education Interim Placement Form is a required document used when a student with an existing IEP transfers into TUSD from another district or state. This form helps to minimize disruption to a student's special education services while they adjust to their new school and/or special education programs. A credentialed TUSD staff member completes the form with a student's parent to create an agreement for services. By documenting the agreed-upon interim services, the form provides a clear, temporary plan that aligns as closely as possible with the student's previous program until the IEP team convenes a 30-day Review IEP Meeting.

[Find the updated Interim Placement forms here.](#)

Inclusion Spotlight:

North School Platooning Model and Learning Center Expansion

**By: Jessica Tacdol; Literacy Coach,
North Elementary School**



Image generated by
M365 Copilot

North School continues to strengthen its literacy instruction through a collaborative platooning model designed to meet the diverse needs of students. Organized by grade level, students are grouped based on instructional data and rotate at different times throughout the literacy block to receive targeted instruction in specific skill areas.

Rather than one teacher delivering every component of literacy to a single homeroom, grade level teams work together to analyze student data and form flexible instructional groups. These platoon groups focus on areas such as foundational reading skills including phonemic awareness and phonics, fluency, vocabulary development, comprehension strategies, and writing in response to text. Because platooning occurs at scheduled times during the day and is coordinated within each grade level, teachers are able to specialize their instruction while maintaining shared responsibility for all students. This structure allows for smaller groups, clearer instructional focus, and stronger alignment to assessment results.

The impact of this model has been increased collaboration among staff and more intentional differentiation for students. Teachers are able to respond more quickly to student needs, adjust groups as data changes, and provide focused instruction that promotes measurable growth.

As North School explores the development of our Learning Center model, the connection to platooning is a natural progression. The Learning Center will build upon the existing framework by adding an additional layer of academic, behavioral, and emotional support. While platooning strengthens core literacy instruction within grade levels, the Learning Center will provide a structured setting for students working toward IEP goals, receiving behavior supports, and developing emotional regulation skills. It will also serve students without IEPs who require additional targeted support in academic or behavioral areas.

The vision for the Learning Center is not to separate services but to create a cohesive system that aligns general education instruction with specialized support. By building on the strong foundation already established through platooning, North School is working toward an integrated model that ensures all students receive the level of support necessary to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

As we reflect on the Learning Center model, including the incorporation of student engagement and a more integrated approach, we will continue collaborating with staff, reviewing data, and engaging with our North School community to ensure every voice is heard and all options are thoughtfully considered.

[Check out the NES Literacy Storybook
generated by Gemini.](#)

Clear Written Offer of FAPE: Transportation

TUSD governing board, per CA Ed Code Section 39800, provides transportation to any student “who lives beyond a reasonable distance to their school and would not, without transportation, have access to appropriate special education instruction and related services at no cost.” (California Transportation Guidelines)

The transportation plan defines a reasonable distance to be: 2 miles for Tk-8 students from student’s home address to school.

2.5 miles for 9-12 students from student’s home address to school.

(Distance measured as the crow flies)

The IEP team determines if a student needs transportation to receive FAPE. The central question for the IEP team to consider is: Do the student’s impairments limit their ability to traverse to and from school to a degree greater than any other same age peer? (San Bruno Park Unified School District V Student (OAH 2016)

[See link for further guidance regarding transportation.](#)

SPECIAL EDUCATION TRANSPORTATION POLICY

TUSD governing board, per CA Ed Code Section 39800, provides transportation to any student “who lives beyond a reasonable distance to their school and would not, without transportation, have access to appropriate special education instruction and related services at no cost.”

REASONABLE DISTANCE

Tk-8 2 miles for Tk-8 students

2.5 miles for 9-12 students
(Distance measured as the crow flies)

IEP TEAM DETERMINATION

Do the student’s impairments limit their ability to traverse to and from school to a degree greater than any other same age peer?

→ See link for further guidance regarding transportation

[AI Generated Infographic](#)

Compliance Corner: It's DRDP Time!

If you serve children ages 3–5 who began receiving services before April 1, 2026, it’s time to complete the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP).

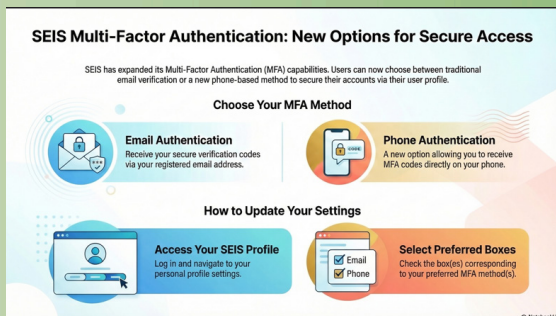
The DRDP is a comprehensive assessment used by early childhood educators to observe, document, and understand children’s developmental progress. It supports meaningful observation across key areas of development, including physical, cognitive, social, and emotional growth, from infancy through preschool.

By using the DRDP, educators gain valuable insight into each child’s strengths and areas of growth, helping guide instruction and ensure children are on track for a successful transition to kindergarten.

Additional guidance is available for administering the DRDP with preschool-aged children. Be sure to review the steps and requirements to ensure assessments are completed accurately and on time.

[Learn more about the DRDP and assessment steps HERE!](#)

Thank you for your continued commitment to supporting our youngest learners and their developmental success.



[AI Image Generated by Google Notebook LM](#)

Local Solutions:

SEIS and MFA

Did you know SEIS now offers two ways to use MFA? You can set it up through your email or now through your phone.

To update your MFA settings, simply go to your SEIS profile and select the box(es) that match your preferred MFA method

Local Solutions: Collaborative Teaching Within the PLC Model

Are you interested in shaping the future of Collaborative Teaching within a PLC model? We are looking for teachers, administrators, and TOSAs to participate in the development of this framework. Please complete the form below if you would like to be involved.

[Complete the Committee Interest Survey Here](#)

Compliance Corner: Service Tracking Audit

TUSD received a list of approximately 200 students selected by CDE for the audit. Case managers for each of these students were given instructions on how to submit the required service tracking information and records. Service Tracking information is due by 3/27. If you have any questions about the audit, please contact your program specialist.

Universal Supports: Accessibility Survey

Your feedback is important to us. Please take a few minutes to provide feedback on the use of AI Tools in this month's Beacon.

[Complete the AI Tools Survey Here](#)