

OLYMPIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

SPECIAL EDUCATION EBD PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT

**PREPARED BY
PUGET SOUND EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DISTRICT
MAY 29, 2008**

OLYMPIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

SPECIAL EDUCATION EBD PROGRAM REVIEW (MAY 2008)

This document constitutes the final report of a Special Education Program Review requested by Barbara Carlson, Director of Elementary Special Education. The scope of this review is about special education services being provided in the elementary and middle school programs serving students with emotional/behavioral disabilities (EBD). The overall goal of this review is to determine where the District is now with regard to best practices, curriculum, continuum of services and supports for students with EBD at the elementary and middle schools.

To accomplish this task, Puget Sound Educational Service District (PSESD) assembled a review team consisting of the following members:

Jim Rich, Director of Special Services, PSESD, and
Laura Matson, Ph.D., Assistant Director, Learning Support Services, Franklin Pierce School District.

The review team conducted the following activities:

- Onsite visits by the PSESD team members to the Centennial Elementary School K-3rd LEAP program, McKenny Elementary School 3rd-5th LEAP program and Reeves Middle School 6th-8th HOPE program (April 18, 2008).
- Review of nine special education files including classroom records and data.
- Review of district program materials.
- Interviews with key people, including:
 - ™# Assistant Superintendent Student Support, Hans Landig;
 - ™# Director of Elementary Special Education, Barbara Carlson;
 - ™# Director of Secondary Special Education, Ed Pong;
 - ™# Building level administrators;
 - ™# Special education instructional staff in the LEAP and HOPE programs; and
 - ™# Parents.
- Development of a report, including observations and recommendations in the areas of continuum of services and curriculum and instructional practices.
- Presentation of the final report to the district administrative and behavior teams.

This report is divided into the following sections: continuum of services/curriculum and instruction, special education file review and recommendations.

SECTION 1: CONTINUUM OF SERVICES/CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

The observations and comments in this section are based on our review of district materials, individual student file reviews, and our interviews with key administrators, staff, and parents.

The district provides three self-contained classrooms for students with significant behavior needs. While there are fifty-six students who have the EBD label in the district as a whole, thirteen students are enrolled in the elementary behavior programs (LEAP) and seven students are enrolled in the middle school behavior program (HOPE). There are currently no behavior

programs at the high school level. The remaining thirty-six students are served in their home schools through inclusive settings.

The district has no mental health component, social workers, or behavior intervention specialists to support students or families that are struggling with mental health or behavioral issues in the schools.

The elementary behavior program (LEAP) and the middle school behavior program (HOPE) are both based on a leveled behavior management system. A multi-tiered level system is the basis for movement through the program. Students accumulate points through demonstrating appropriate behavior over sustained periods. Students' access to various reinforcing activities and privileges increase as they move through the system. Students are eligible for mainstreaming activities within regular education, which may include music, P.E., recess, lunch and regular classes, when they reach the upper levels. It appears that this level system is not meeting the needs of some students and is restricting access to the general education program. Several parents as well as one administrator expressed concern regarding this lack of access to the general education classroom.

The positive behavior support system as described in the LEAP/HOPE program description starts with each student having behavioral goals in his/her IEP. These goals identify specific social/emotional/cognitive skills that are impeding the student from participating in the general education program. Progress towards mastery of these goals is tracked and evaluated in daily behavior charting and ongoing progress monitoring. Progress on the level system is tracked visually in the classroom giving students the chance to watch their progress.

A generalized Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) is written into each student's IEP and modified to meet his/her individual needs. The new FBA/BIP process that the district has implemented this year should improve the quality of the BIPs and insure consistency across the program.

Physical restraint and isolation in the "resolution room" are included in all of the BIPs at both elementary LEAP programs. There is no resolution room at the middle school HOPE program. If a student continues to be dangerous or disruptive, he/she may be sent home for the remainder of the day. It appears that students are sent home frequently in the elementary LEAP programs. This is an area of concern and should be carefully analyzed.

The District has specific guidelines for use of a safety space with a door (resolution room). The written guidelines are consistent with WAC 392-172A-03135. However, from our observations it appears that the two resolution rooms may not comply with the requirement to permit continuous visual monitoring. Both resolution rooms had locks that could not be released from inside and, therefore, require continuous visual supervision. From our record review as well as our discussion with staff, it appeared that the resolution room is a significant program component of the elementary LEAP programs that is written into every student's IEP rather than being individually determined.

Again, from our record review as well as our discussion with staff and parents, it appeared that there were several students who spent unusually long periods of time in the resolution room (more than an hour).

There doesn't appear to be any set curriculum for social skills or academics for those needing specially designed instruction. Academic instruction doesn't appear to be a major emphasis of the program and appears to be limiting some student's ability to successfully reenter the general education classroom. The academic curriculum mentioned included *Read Well* and *Trophys* for reading, *Trailblazers* and *Saxon Math* for math. Writing included daily journals where students describe their emotions. *Step Up*, *Second Step*, and *Skill Streaming* were mentioned as being used in the elementary programs for social skills. There was no consistency between the three programs.

SECTION 2: SPECIAL EDUCATION FILE REVIEW

The following section contains the observations from the special education file review.

Nine student files were reviewed using the OSPI monitoring checklist. Three files were randomly selected from each of the EBD classrooms in Centennial Elementary, McKenny Elementary and Reeves Middle Schools. Classroom data sheets, incidence reports, and individual student data were also reviewed.

- The special education files were very well organized and included all required documentation.
- Eight of nine IEPs were current. One IEP was 4 days late.
- Eight of nine evaluations were current. One evaluation was 11 days late.
- Seven of nine IEP meetings contained the required participants. General education teacher participation was missing in two files. However, the reviewer may have missed the participant excusal documentation.
- Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) were well written and comprehensive.
- Measurable annual goals matched evaluation report recommendations and PLAAFP in all files reviewed.
- Many annual goals were not measurable. Academic goals were generally more measurable than behavioral or social goals.
- All files contained Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs). The BIPs for the HOPE program were more individualized than those for the LEAP program. The new FBA/BIP process that the district has implemented this year should improve the quality of the BIPs and insure consistency across the program.
- One file indicated that aversive therapy was provided without appropriate IEP documentation. Documentation for aversive therapy was documented in the previous year's IEP.
- Classroom data sheets were completed and up to date. The monthly summary sheet for the HOPE program was very well done and one that the team would like to share with other districts.
- There was some inconsistency as to how incidence reports were completed. Specific times in isolation were not documented in some files.
- From this file review as well as our classroom observations and staff interviews, it appears that some students are being frequently removed from school for behavioral issues.

SECTION 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: The district should develop a method/process to assist building teams with the most difficult students, especially those that are frequently being sent home or are on reduced days. The district might consider adding a behavior intervention specialist to provide this assistance.

Recommendation 2: We would recommend that the district consider implementing a school-wide positive behavior support program in all of the schools where behavior classrooms are located. This would enhance the student opportunities for successful inclusion in the general education program. Information on school-wide positive behavior support can be found at www.Safeandcivilschools.com and www.pbis.org.

Recommendation 3: The new FBA/BIP process that the district has implemented this year should improve the quality of the BIPs and insure consistency across the program. We would encourage the district to provide the staff with the necessary staff development to ensure this happens.

Recommendation 4: The district needs to evaluate the effectiveness of the use of the resolution rooms in the elementary behavior classrooms. Specifically, the district needs ensure that the resolution rooms and procedures for using them meet all WAC requirements and that there is a process for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of their usage.

Recommendation 5: The district needs to do an analysis of the numbers and frequency of students being sent home for disruptive behavior. These removals have discipline implications as well as program implications. As part of this analysis, we would suggest that the district also look at the data from the high schools for students with emotional/behavioral disabilities.

Recommendation 6: The district should consider evaluating the effectiveness of the level system. It appears to be very inflexible and a barrier to inclusion in the general education program. The following website might provide the district with some alternatives to the use of level systems to manage students with emotional and behavioral disorders.
<http://cecp.air.org/interact/authoronline/january98/ineffective.htm>

The district might also find the following journal article helpful:

EJ486440

Title: Level Systems and the Law: Are They Compatible?

Authors: Scheuermann, Brenda; And Others

Source: Behavioral Disorders, v19 n3 p205-20 May 1994

Abstract: This article addresses legal concerns regarding the use of level systems to manage students with emotional and behavioral disorders. Concerns pertain to a failure to individualize the program, including restricted access to the least restrictive environment, curricular issues, and procedural concerns. A decision-making model to aid in designing individualized level systems is offered. (Authors/DB)

Recommendation 7: The elementary programs might want to consider adding a mental health component into their classroom. The district may want to look at using a school social worker to address both the mental health needs of the students and also to work with the families to help them access the necessary community resources as well as help make and maintain those community linkages for the students.

Recommendation 8: The district needs to provide training on writing measurable annual goals. The team would suggest using the newly published OSPI Special Education Evaluation and Technical Assistance Module as a model for the training. This module contains many good examples and non-examples of measurable annual goals. The Module can be found at <http://www.k12.wa.us/specialed/module.aspx>.

Recommendation 9: The district should consider strengthening the instructional program. Providing a strong instructional program emphasizing both behavior and academics helps reduce inappropriate behaviors in the classroom as well as increasing the students' success in the general education curriculum. The following are some suggestions of instructional materials to consider:

From SRA

Elementary - *Reading Mastery*

Middle School - *Corrective Reading* (Decoding and/or Comprehension)

Connecting Math Concepts (elementary through algebra)

From Sopris West

Reading -

The Six Minute Solution Language!

REWARDS

REWARDS Plus (reading for middle school with focus on social studies and science)

REWARDS Writing

Writing –

Step Up to Writing

Behavior/Social Skills -

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program (elementary & middle)

ASSIST (Affective Social Skills Instructional Strategies and Techniques)
(primary & intermediate)

We would like to thank the Olympia staff and administrators for all the support they provided this effort—pulling together data, organizing visits, and answering all our questions. We truly appreciate the cooperative and thoughtful attitudes of these individuals, as well the administrators and staff in the schools who took time out of their busy schedules to answer our questions. We hope this report will be useful in improving the programs and services for students with emotional/behavioral disabilities in special education.