



CSIS California School Information Services

# Lindsay Unified School District

## Special Education Review

February 10, 2015



**Joel D. Montero**  
Chief Executive Officer







February 10, 2015

Thomas Rooney, Superintendent

Lindsay Unified School District

371 E. Hermosa

Lindsay, CA 93247

Dear Superintendent Rooney:

In August 2014, the Lindsay Unified School District and the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) entered into an agreement for a review of the district's special education programs and services. Specifically, the agreement states that FCMAT will perform the following:

1. Conduct a comprehensive review of the special education delivery system for preschool through grade 12 and determine how the program can be more cost efficient. Review the learning center model.
2. Make recommendations to reduce the contributions from the unrestricted general fund while maintaining the quality of services and meeting legal requirements.
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the staffing process for certificated staff and classroom aides, including class size ratios, and provide recommendations as needed. This will include all certificated staff such as teachers, speech, psychologists, adaptive physical education teachers, and occupational therapists.
4. Compare the district's central office special education department staffing to evaluate and ensure that effective clerical, program, functional and administrative support are aligned with those of districts of comparable size and structure. The team will compare three to six similarly sized districts by using the Ed Data website or specific districts selected by the district, and will make recommendations to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
5. Review the district's implementation of Response to Intervention (RtI) and provide recommendations as needed.
6. Determine whether the district is over identifying students for special education services compared to statewide average, and make recommendations that will reduce over identification, if needed.

This report contains the study team's findings and recommendations.

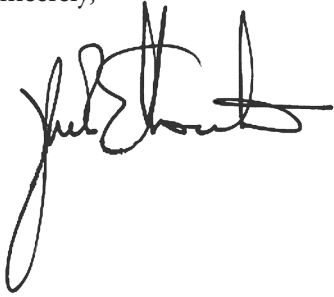
**FCMAT**

Joel D. Montero, Chief Executive Officer

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We appreciate the opportunity to serve you and we extend thanks to all the staff of the Lindsay Unified School District for their cooperation and assistance during fieldwork.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joel D. Montero". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "M".

Joel D. Montero  
Chief Executive Officer

# Table of Contents

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| About FCMAT .....                 | iii |
| Introduction .....                | 1   |
| Executive Summary .....           | 3   |
| Findings and Recommendations..... | 5   |
| Program Delivery .....            | 5   |
| Fiscal Issues .....               | 11  |
| Staffing and Efficiencies.....    | 15  |
| Central Office.....               | 19  |
| Response to Intervention .....    | 21  |
| Identification Rate.....          | 23  |
| Appendices .....                  | 25  |



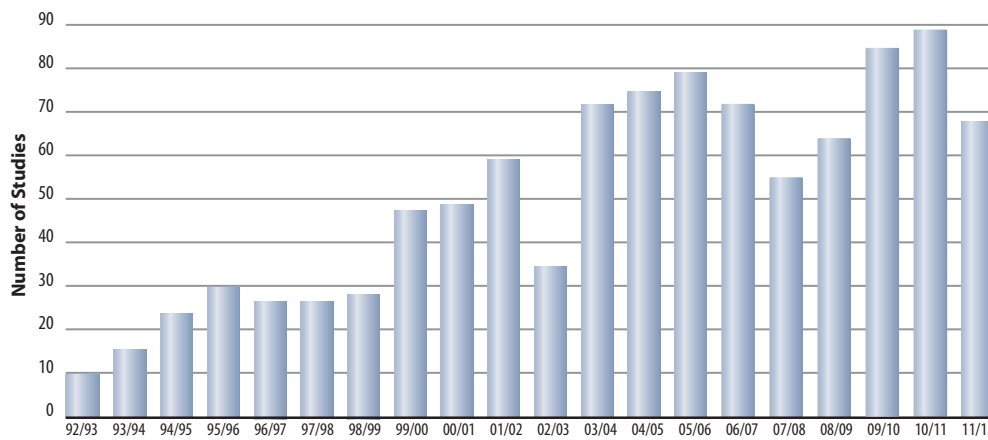
# About FCMAT

FCMAT's primary mission is to assist California's local K-14 educational agencies to identify, prevent, and resolve financial and data management challenges. FCMAT provides fiscal and data management assistance, professional development training, product development and other related school business and data services. FCMAT's fiscal and management assistance services are used not just to help avert fiscal crisis, but to promote sound financial practices and efficient operations. FCMAT's data management services are used to help local educational agencies (LEAs) meet state reporting responsibilities, improve data quality, and share information.

FCMAT may be requested to provide fiscal crisis or management assistance by a school district, charter school, community college, county office of education, the state Superintendent of Public Instruction, or the Legislature.

When a request or assignment is received, FCMAT assembles a study team that works closely with the local education agency to define the scope of work, conduct on-site fieldwork and provide a written report with findings and recommendations to help resolve issues, overcome challenges and plan for the future.

**Studies by Fiscal Year**



FCMAT also develops and provides numerous publications, software tools, workshops and professional development opportunities to help local educational agencies operate more effectively and fulfill their fiscal oversight and data management responsibilities. The California School Information Services (CSIS) arm of FCMAT assists the California Department of Education with the implementation of the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) and also maintains DataGate, the FCMAT/CSIS software LEAs use for CSIS services. FCMAT was created by Assembly Bill 1200 in 1992 to assist LEAs to meet and sustain their financial obligations. Assembly Bill 107 in 1997 charged FCMAT with responsibility for CSIS and its statewide data management work. Assembly Bill 1115 in 1999 codified CSIS' mission.

AB 1200 is also a statewide plan for county offices of education and school districts to work together locally to improve fiscal procedures and accountability standards. Assembly Bill 2756 (2004) provides specific responsibilities to FCMAT with regard to districts that have received emergency state loans.

In January 2006, SB 430 (charter schools) and AB 1366 (community colleges) became law and expanded FCMAT's services to those types of LEAs.

Since 1992, FCMAT has been engaged to perform more than 1,000 reviews for LEAs, including school districts, county offices of education, charter schools and community colleges. The Kern County Superintendent of Schools is the administrative agent for FCMAT. The team is led by Joel D. Montero, Chief Executive Officer, with funding derived through appropriations in the state budget and a modest fee schedule for charges to requesting agencies.

# Introduction

## Background

The Lindsay Unified School District is located in Tulare County and serves 4,176 learners in kindergarten through 12th grade at nine schools. The district also serves approximately 181 special education learners in cooperation with the Tulare County Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA).

Lindsay Unified is one of 16 districts in the state that has developed a performance-based system, which is in its third year of implementation. In this system, learners work at their own performance level and advance when they have demonstrated proficiency of the required knowledge or skills.

In August 2014, the district and the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) entered into an agreement for a review of the district's special education programs and services. Specifically, the agreement states that FCMAT will perform the following:

1. Conduct a comprehensive review of the special education delivery system for preschool through grade 12 and determine how the program can be more cost efficient. Review the learner center model.
2. Make recommendations to reduce the contributions from the unrestricted general fund while maintaining the quality of services and meeting legal requirements.
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the staffing process for certificated staff and classroom aides, including class size ratios, and provide recommendations as needed. This will include all certificated staff such as teachers, speech, psychologists, adaptive physical education teachers, and occupational therapists.
4. Compare the district's central office special education department staffing to evaluate and ensure that effective clerical, program, functional and administrative support are aligned with those of districts of comparable size and structure. The team will compare three to six similarly sized districts by using the Ed Data website or specific districts selected by the district, and will make recommendations to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
5. Review the district's implementation of Response to Intervention (RtI) and provide recommendations as needed.
6. Determine whether the district is over identifying students for special education services compared to statewide average, and make recommendations that will reduce over identification, if needed.

## Study and Report Guidelines

FCMAT visited the district on October 21-23, 2014 to conduct interviews, collect data and review documents. This report is the result of those activities and is divided into the following sections:

- I. Executive Summary
- II. Program Delivery
- III. Fiscal Issues
- IV. Staffing and Efficiencies
- V. Central Office
- VI. Response to Intervention
- VII. Identification Rate
- VIII. Appendices

In writing its reports, FCMAT uses the Associated Press Stylebook, a comprehensive guide to usage and accepted style that emphasizes conciseness and clarity. In addition, this guide emphasizes plain language, discourages the use of jargon and capitalizes relatively few terms.

**For the purposes of this FCMAT study, students will be referred to as learners and teachers as learning facilitators per the district's request.**

## Study Team

The study team was composed of the following members:

William P. Gillaspie, Ed.D.  
FCMAT Deputy Administrative Officer  
Sacramento, CA

Keith Butler, Ph.D.\*  
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Coronado Unified School District  
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Mariam Galvarin, Ed.D.  
FCMAT Consultant  
San Mateo, CA

\*As a member of this study team, this consultant was not representing his respective employer but was working solely as an independent contractor for FCMAT. Each team member reviewed the draft report to confirm accuracy and achieve consensus on the final recommendations.

# Executive Summary

The Lindsay Unified School District serves learners from preschool through 12th grade, operates a fee-based preschool program at the Washington Preschool Complex, and provides services to special-needs learners in an inclusive preschool. The district supports kindergarten through 12th grade learners with special needs in an inclusive setting using education specialists. Additionally, learners who need behavioral intervention are served at an intervention resource center and utilize mental health support services. Some autistic learners requiring additional services for behavior and social skills and other learners with health-related needs receive additional services through 1-to-1 behavior management technicians.

Staff indicated that a continuum of services is lacking for moderate special-needs learners. The district should consider implementing a schedule of support and services to meet the needs of these learners. FCMAT found that the staff has an inconsistent understanding of the definition, procedures, and policies of the performance-based system districtwide. However, all staff embraced the system and indicated that it is a positive experience for learners.

The Special Education Department could not provide the requested budgetary data on increases in the special education budget for the 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14 fiscal years. Some general categories of increased services were provided, but without specifics to determine whether these expenditures were warranted on an ongoing basis. In addition, the director could not provide a list of required special education services by learner that could be used to determine the total positions and materials necessary to meet learner needs or to adequately inform special education budgeting.

The special education budget is developed using a rollover of prior year revenues and expenditures to provide the basis for each fiscal year, with the prior year's budget serving as the foundation to develop the current-fiscal year budget. The district has no documentation of any evidence used to justify hiring decisions or budget adjustments based on the lack of a list of required special education services. There is no evidence that staffing ratios are consistently applied to all special education positions.

The Business Services Department uses a FileMaker Pro program to track positions, but there is no indication that it uses a position control system that involves coordinated review and approval by the Special Education, Human Resources and Business Services departments. For the past three years, the district spent special education reserves to maintain programs.

FCMAT evaluated the effectiveness of staffing for certificated employees and classroom aides, including class-size ratios. All behavior management services are written under supplemental support on the individualized education program (IEP). The district should consider utilizing the contracted speech and language pathologist only for caseload overage.

The district does not track services and placement provided by Tulare County Office of Education for district-of-residence learners. The Special Education Department does not develop a formal projection spreadsheet of learners, staff, and caseload requirements for the following school year for the use of the Human Resources or Business Services departments. Formal communication is lacking between these three departments and the county office to increase

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understanding regarding billing, service levels, and how the county office staffs and funds the programs attended by district learners.

The district and SELPA should develop a system to include regularly scheduled meetings with chief business officers and program directors countywide. The district sometimes receives information on the funding model that it does not understand. The SELPA should develop a system that is clear to all parties involved with the funding formula.

Regarding instructional assistants, the district should develop and implement a formal evaluation to determine additional services (adult assistance) and include specific information on frequency and duration of service. The IEP should include an independence plan and transition or “fading” plan for support and regularly review the required additional support service.

FCMAT reviewed the district’s central office Special Education Department staffing to ensure that effective clerical, program, functional and administrative support is aligned with that of districts of comparable size and structure. Staffing is appropriate in this area. The director of special education/student services has an excessive number of assigned duties. Because of this position’s many assigned duties, she does not have sufficient time to develop or monitor the special education budget. The director of special education/student services’ immediate supervisor should help the position prioritize duties and responsibilities.

FCMAT reviewed the district’s implementation of Response to Intervention (RtI). Staff indicated that RtI is inconsistently implemented as it relates to the performance-based system and that the roles and responsibilities in the RtI model are not consistent districtwide. The district should define the staff’s roles and responsibilities in providing the RtI model districtwide as well as develop a districtwide data collection system and progress monitoring for the use of the RtI model in the performance-based system.

FCMAT reviewed the number of district learners receiving special education services and found that Lindsay Unified has an identification rate of 5.1% compared to the average state rate of 10% to 12%.

# Findings and Recommendations

## Program Delivery

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) ensures services to disabled children throughout the nation. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early interventions, special education and related services to all eligible infants, toddlers (preschoolers), children, and youth with disabilities up to age 22. Furthermore, each state must ensure that a free appropriate public education (FAPE) is available to any individual child with a disability who needs special education and related services even though the child has not failed or been retained in a course or grade and is advancing from grade level to grade level (34 CFR 300.101(c)).

A review of data and staff interviews indicate the Lindsay Unified School District provides special education services to learners from preschool age through the 12th grade.

Infants and toddlers with disabilities (birth to age three) and their families receive early intervention services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 Part C. Final regulations governing the Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with

Disabilities were published on September 28, 2011, in the Federal Register. These regulations became effective on October 28, 2011. Since the enactment of the original legislation of IDEA in 1975, children and youth (ages three to 22) receive special education and related services under Part B of IDEA. IDEA requires that children who receive early intervening services and participate in a preschool program that receives funds under Part B or another appropriate service “experience a smooth and effective transition to those preschool programs.” In California, a child receiving services under Part C and eligible for services under Part B must have an individualized education program (IEP) created and implemented by the time the child turns three years old.

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## Preschool Program

The district provides early intervention services and transition planning and operates a fee-based preschool program at the Washington Preschool Complex adjacent to Washington Elementary School. The preschool transition planning, intake, and assessment office is located at the Washington Preschool Complex. The preschool program is divided into a morning session from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. and an afternoon session from noon to 3 p.m. and serves eight disabled learners. The preschool director and facilitators provide services to preschoolers in partnership with the Central California Diagnostic Center. The collaborative and consultative partnership with this center serves autistic learners in the general education setting. Additionally, the district has established a preschool team including diagnostic center members, a school psychologist, an occupational therapist (OT), a speech and language pathologist (SLP), a physical therapist, a transition specialist/education specialist, a preschool learning facilitator, a behavior management technician, and a paraprofessional. This team serves up to 15 learners with and without identified disabilities per session for a total of up to 30 learners in accordance with each learner’s IEP.

The district model and delivery of early intervening services has helped the learners transition smoothly and receive a free appropriate public education.

The following table, from the California Department of Education (2012) indicates that the district has met the transition goal from Part C to Part B of the IDEA.

### ***Part C to Part B Transition: 2012–13 District Level Special Education Annual Performance Report Measure***

| No. Children Referred from Part C by Their 3 <sup>rd</sup> Birthday | On Time Ineligible | On Time Eligible | Parental Consent Refusal | Percent On Time Eligible | Target | Met Target |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------|------------|
| 407                                                                 | 0                  | 402              | *                        | 100.0%                   | 100%   | Yes        |

*Data Source: June 2013 CASEMIS Submission Items SELPA\_code, Birth Date, Referral Date, Parental Consent, Initial Evaluation Date, Plan Type and Last IEP Date. Retrieved from [www.cde.gov](http://www.cde.gov), October 12, 2014.*

*Calculation: Students On Time Eligible / (Children Referred – On Time Ineligible – Parental Consent Refused) \* 100*

## **Kindergarten through Eighth Grade Programs**

State and federal laws require every learner to have the opportunity to be educated in general education with his or her nondisabled peers, also known as the least restrictive environment, to the greatest extent possible. Compliance with this mandate is measured by the percentage of time a learner is removed from the general education classroom and placed in a special education setting.

Since 2011, the district has been a performance-based system (PBS), which focuses on the individual learner's level of learning. The district reason for choosing PBS is as follows:

...because the traditional educational system was failing far too many learners. There are many reasons for the failure, but one crucial aspect is related to the fact that many students do not take ownership of their learning and/or fully engage in the educational system. Our learners must be ready to compete in a global society when they graduate from LUSD. The performance-based approach is designed to meet all the needs of our learners through rigor, relationships, relevance, and helping learners to take responsibility for their own learning. We need to ensure that our learners, staff, parents, and community understand what is expected of our learners at each content level and the criteria to achieve proficiency on each standard at each level. We are creating a system in which the students partner with their teachers to reach that proficiency. (LUSD Comprehensive Manual (Draft), P.19)

According to PBS, special needs learners attend general education classes with their nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate. This aligns with the California Education Code Section 56364.2, "In providing or arranging for the provision of activities, each public agency shall ensure that each [student] participates in those activities with nondisabled students to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of the [student with a disability], including nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities..." The district staff could not explain how, when, and why the district implemented PBS, and staff members had an inconsistent understanding of the definition, procedures, and policies of PBS districtwide.

In partnership with the Tulare County Office of Education, the district provides a specialized program, Intervention Resource Center, at Lincoln Elementary school for elementary learners requiring intensive behavioral health intervention. The learners participate in general education classes as appropriate. The county office assigns the education specialist, and the district provides the facility and related services in accordance with each learner's IEP. The following positions and models provide related services:

- A school psychologist
- A speech and language pathologist
- A behaviorist, occupational therapist
- An adaptive physical education specialist via consultation
- A direct model
- A “push-in” model where the related service provider attends the general education setting and provides instruction alongside the general education facilitator
- A “pull-out” where the special needs learner may receive services in a separate classroom at the school site.

Additionally, the district in partnership with the county office operates a self-contained special day class at Reagan Elementary School for learners with moderate to severe disabilities.

## Secondary Programs (Ninth through 12<sup>th</sup> grade)

Since the district operates a PBS, learners continue their education from the elementary to the secondary level based on their individual needs at Lindsay High School or John J. Cairns Continuation High School. Special needs learners attend general education classes and receive related support services as indicated in their IEPs from the school psychologist, speech and language pathologist, behaviorist, occupational therapist, and adaptive physical education specialist via consultation, direct service model, “push-in” model where the provider attends the general education setting and provides instruction alongside the general education facilitator, or “pull-out” model in which the learner with special needs may receive services in a separate classroom at the school site.

In partnership with the county office, the district also operates a self-contained classroom program, the Green Zone Project, for learners who need a smaller learning environment with mental health support. The county office provides the education specialist, rehabilitation therapist, and behavior intervention specialist. The district provides the school psychologist, behavior management therapist, speech and language pathologist and other service providers required by each learner's IEP. Staff reported the district does not offer a program for learners with moderate to severe disabilities.

Special needs learners at the John J. Cairns Continuation High School receive “push-in” model services from the education specialist and school psychologist in the least restrictive educational environment.

The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs has provided the California Department of Education (CDE) – Special Education Division with guidance and instructions on developing calculations to measure progress toward meeting the least-restrictive-environment provision of IDEA. Targets and corresponding benchmarks have been established in the State Performance Plan for IDEA 2004 with the following three measures:

- A. Inside the regular class 80% or more of the day
- B. Inside the regular class less than 40% of the day
- C. In separate schools, residential facilities, or homebound/hospital placement

The following table from the California Department of Education (2012) indicates that the district has not met the least-restrictive-environment goals of measure B. Special needs learners ages six through 22 spend more time in specialized classrooms apart from their nondisabled peers.

***Least Restrictive Environment: 2012–13 District Level Special Education Annual Performance Report Measure***

| Measure             | Total No. of Learners receiving Special Education (Age 6-22) | No. of Learners in the environment | Percent of Learners in environment receiving Special Education | Target This Year | Target Met |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------|
| A. >80%             | 162                                                          | 133                                | 82.1%                                                          | >76%             | Yes        |
| B. <40%             |                                                              | 19                                 | 11.7%                                                          | <9%              | No         |
| C. Separate Schools |                                                              | 10                                 | 6.2%                                                           | <3.8%            | No         |

*Data Source: December 2012 CASEMIS Submission Items District of Accountability, Age, and a compiled data field consisting of unduplicated Federal School Setting and Percent in Regular Class. Retrieved from [www.cde.gov](http://www.cde.gov), October 12, 2014.*

*NOTE: Separate Schools includes Students in Separate Schools, Residential Facilities and Homebound/Hospital. It does not include students in Correctional Facilities or those that are Parentally Placed in Private School.*

## Transition Program (18-22)

As a continuum of services, when a learner with an IEP reaches age 16 and above, the IEP team must include all eight coordinated, measurable, annual IEP goals and transition services that will reasonably help the learner achieve the appropriate postsecondary goals. The transition program is the program category for special needs learners who are transitioning from high school to either a postsecondary education and/or an adult life. Learners who are not on diploma track may continue schooling up to age 22 and learn independent living and job readiness skills.

The district does not operate a transition program for learners who are between ages 18 and 22 and are not on the diploma track. District staff indicated these learners often attend the county office transition programs.

The table below from the California Department of Education (2012) indicates that the district has not met the postsecondary-transition goals and services.

## ***Secondary Transition Goals and Services: 2012–13 District Level Special Education Annual Performance Report Measure***

| <b>No. with Post-secondary Goals and Transition Services</b> | <b>Total No. of Learners Reviewed for Transition Services</b> | <b>Percent of learners with Postsecondary Goals and Transition Services</b> | <b>Target</b> | <b>Target Met</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| 52                                                           | 49                                                            | 94.2%                                                                       | 100%          | No                |

*Data Source: June 2013 CASEMIS Submission Items District of Accountability, Age, Transition Service Goals 1 through 8 Calculation: Students with “Yes” Responses in Goals 1 through 8/Number of Students 16 or older \* 100. Retrieved from [www.cde.gov](http://www.cde.gov), October 12, 2014.*

## **Learning Center Model**

A learning center through a general education definition is characterized as a designated classroom that provides learners with opportunities to complete a project or learn about a subject in more depth. The center is filled with materials such as manipulatives, books, and other instructional materials. Learners are assigned to this center to receive help in core subjects when it is needed, and they are encouraged to work independently or in small groups. Facilitators spend time with learners either individually or in small groups, helping them learn lessons in their own way and style (Learning Center, retrieved from <http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/new-approach-learning-centers>, October 12, 2014).

Staff indicated they do not operate based on the learning center model. However, if a learner requires individual instruction, the facilitator meets with him or her individually or in a small group to reteach a lesson or complete a project. Staff have an inconsistent understanding of a learning center model. More information on this model is attached as Appendix B to this report.

## **Recommendations**

*The district should:*

1. Continue the current process for learners who are transitioning from Part C to Part B.
2. Continue the partnership with the Central California Diagnostic Center for autistic learners in the general education setting.
3. Consider implementing a schedule of support and services for learners with moderate special needs.
4. Provide clear definitions, procedures, and policies on how PBS is implemented districtwide.
5. Clarify the definition of “learning center model” to all staff and determine if the district consistently uses the model.
6. Consider providing services for the moderate to severe population either in addition to the county office or return the learners to the district and provide a class.



## Fiscal Issues

The special education director could not provide requested budgetary data regarding increases in the special education budget for the years 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14. Some general categories of increased services were available, but without the specifics necessary to determine if expenditures were warranted on an ongoing basis. In addition, the special education director could not provide a list of required special education services by learner, which could be used to determine the total positions and materials necessary to meet learner needs or adequately inform special education budgeting.

The district develops the special education budget each year on a rollover basis, with the prior year budget serving as the foundation of the current year budget. Based on the lack of a list of required special education services, the district has no documentation or evidence to justify hiring decisions or budget adjustments. There is no indication that staffing ratios are consistently applied to all special education positions.

Business Services has a FileMaker program that is used to track positions, but there is no evidence that a position control system is used that involves coordinated review and approval by the Special Education, Human Resources and Business Services departments.

For several years, the district spent special education reserves to maintain programs. To understand the true contribution to special education through the years, the calculation must include the reduction of reserves. Consideration of this factor results in the following data:

| Source: Lindsay USD                      | Actual      | Actual      | Actual      | Budget      |
|------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Goals 5000-5999                          | 2011-12     | 2012-13     | 2013-14     | 2014-15     |
| TOTAL REVENUE                            | \$2,058,007 | \$1,963,059 | \$1,971,906 | \$2,002,421 |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURES                       | \$2,406,281 | \$2,196,239 | \$2,561,120 | \$2,420,606 |
| Special Education operating deficit      | \$(348,274) | \$(233,180) | \$(589,214) | \$(418,185) |
| Operating deficit as a % of expenditures | 14.5%       | 10.6%       | 23.0%       | 17.3%       |

For the 2014-15 budget, the district reallocated positions between special education and student services. A significant portion of the salaries and benefits of the special education director, office manager and district psychologists, totaling \$256,631, was transferred from the special education to the student services budget. Returning these costs to the special education budget to provide directly comparable data would result in the following data:

| Source: Lindsay USD                                   | Actual      | Actual      | Actual      | Budget      |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Goals 5000-5999                                       | 2011-12     | 2012-13     | 2013-14     | 2014-15     |
| TOTAL REVENUE                                         | \$2,058,007 | \$1,963,059 | \$1,971,906 | \$2,002,421 |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURES                                    | \$2,406,281 | \$2,196,239 | \$2,561,120 | \$2,420,606 |
| Special Education operating deficit                   | \$(348,274) | \$(233,179) | \$(589,215) | \$(418,185) |
| Adjustment--adding reallocated Student Services Costs |             |             |             | \$256,631   |
| Recalculated SE operating deficit                     | \$(348,274) | \$(233,180) | \$(589,214) | \$(674,816) |
| Operating deficit as a % of expenditures              | 14.5%       | 10.6%       | 23.0%       | 27.9%       |

Comparable data shows that the special education operating deficit is growing significantly. Reallocating special education expenses to student services is appropriate under the district method of operation. Therefore, the \$418,185 operating deficit in 2014-15 will be the contribution from the general fund to special education.

Additionally, the budget does not include special education transportation costs. The district receives no resource 7240, severely disabled/occupational impaired (SD/OI) apportionment funding blended into its Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) entitlement. Lindsay Unified contracts with Visalia Unified for general education and special education transportation for learners. However, it should request that Visalia Unified provide an accounting on the actual costs of the special education transportation component and add this to its calculation of contribution from the general fund for an accurate contribution percentage.

Although the county office receives approximately \$1.80 million in resource 7240, SD/OI apportionment funding as part of its LCFF entitlement, it does not provide Lindsay Unified with special education transportation services. The situation appears the same for almost all SELPA member districts. The district also lacks knowledge of the calculations behind the “off-the-top” funding model, the allocation of educational related mental health services (ERMS)/mental health/behavioral health funding, and the SELPA allocation of special education preschool funding. Staff interviews indicated the SELPA finance committee does not have an active role in reviewing SELPA fiscal information or providing significant input or recommendations to the SELPA superintendents’ committee.

The special education director and the Business Services Department confirmed that special education has no costs related to legal issues, due process, or nonpublic schools. These are indicators that the district meets the special education needs of its learners and their parents. However, complete lack of costs in these areas could also indicate that the district provides a greater level of service than can be sustained with current resources.

Through the local education agency (LEA) billing option, a district may submit claims to Medi-Cal for covered services to eligible children who are enrolled in special education programs. This allows school districts and/or county offices to receive federal funds to help pay for health-related special education and related services. A district can include psychologists, speech therapists, nurses, health aides, transportation, wheelchair buses, behavior specialists and mental health specialists in Medi-Cal billing.

A review of the Medi-Cal documents provided did not determine whether Medi-Cal LEA billing is maximized by using all eligible personnel to generate revenues for special education costs.

## Recommendations

*The district should:*

1. Ensure the special education director has a recordkeeping system that lists each learner requiring special education service, including the specific IEP-related resources (services and equipment) for each learner and the sunset date for each resource. These resources should then be compiled into specific budgetary needs for special education.

2. Assign the special education director and chief business official (CBO) to build a budget using a zero-based approach, with justifications for services tied to IEPs and mutually agreed staffing ratios. Budget changes throughout the year should be made as services are no longer needed or are added. The special education director, executive human resources director and CBO should perform regular, coordinated reviews of positions throughout the year.
3. Assign the CBO to blend all special education costs to understand the true general fund contribution to special education, including transportation. The district should also recognize that deficit spending in the Special Education Department, leading to a reduction in reserves, is also a contribution to special education.
4. Request the SELPA member district CBOs to initiate a monthly finance steering committee meeting with the SELPA business specialist at the entity's office. The committee should then report the information from those meetings to all member district CBOs. The finance steering committee should also require its input on SELPA finance matters to be conveyed to the SELPA superintendent's committee.
5. Ensure that the district superintendent and CBO regularly verify that the costs of the district special education program are justifiable compared to other districts. This is especially important given the fact that there are no special education legal costs, due process costs, or nonpublic school costs.
6. Work with the contracting LEA vendors billing agency to ensure revenues are maximized. To support those efforts, the district should consider using incentives to enhance billing such as providing through the revenues testing protocols, conference attendance, etc.



## Staffing and Efficiencies

### Instructional Support Programs/Resource Specialist Programs

The district defines education specialists as facilitators for learners with and without special needs. Staff reported these specialists work primarily in the general education classroom and support in a pull-out model, as needed. Education specialists monitor progress through PBS, and the district provides services through specialized academic instruction. The 8.64 full-time equivalent (FTE) education specialists' caseload identifies 167 learners with IEPs, an average ratio of 1-to-19.3. The district model of instructional support program (ISP) includes no caseload requirements. However, if this service takes the place of a resource program, the maximum caseload for district resource specialists is 28 learners according to Education Code (EC 56362(c)). District data in the following table indicates that it has an average caseload of 19.3 learners or 8.7 less than the maximum allowed by Education Code. If the district staffed ISP/RSP positions according to the statutory maximum, it could decrease staffing by approximately 2.68 FTE.

| Program | No. of FTE | Caseload | Average Caseload |
|---------|------------|----------|------------------|
| ISP     | 8.64       | 167      | 1:19.3           |

### Special Education Learning Facilitator Assistants

Documents indicate the district has a 3-hour special education teacher assistant and a 4-hour teacher assistant. Both assistants support learners with IEPs at the high school, primarily in general education. A general guide for special education teacher assistants is one 6-hour assistant position for every special education learning facilitator. The district employs 1.38 FTE special education teaching assistants; however, under the RSP model, the district could need an additional 4.58 6-hour assistants.

### Behavior Management Technicians

The district employs behavior management technicians who have specialized training to support behaviors usually specific to learners on the autism spectrum. These technicians also serve learners who need specialized toileting and feeding procedures and those with emotional behavioral problems. The district has nine 6.5-hour behavior management technicians and one 3.5-hour technician, and one 3-hour technician. The salary is approximately \$18.01 per hour for 3.5 hour per day staff, while a teacher assistant is paid approximately \$15.01 per hour for 3.5 hours per day. Although documents indicated the behavior management technicians do not exclusively serve learners using a 1-to-1 ratio, the 11 employees serve approximately 38 learners with a ratio ranging from 1-to-1 to 1-to-10, which is approximately 21% of the total special education population. All behavior management technician services are written under supplemental support and not under a direct service (Guidelines for special circumstance instructional assistance are attached as Appendix C to this report).

## Psychologists

The district employs three FTE psychologists for special education and general education learners. In addition to performing initial and triennial assessments, the psychologists provide behavioral support for all learners as well as supervising and training behavior management technicians. School Services of California (SSC) recommends a ratio of 1,466 learners per psychologist. The following table shows the district's school psychologist staffing ratio compared to the statewide average indicated by CalEdFacts ([www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/fp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/fp)), a compilation of statewide data. Based on the information in Data Quest, the district had 4,130 learners in the 2013-14 school year for a psychologist to learner ratio of 1-to-1,376.

| Program      | No. of FTE | Caseload | SSC Guideline for Learners per Psychologist | District Caseload Average |
|--------------|------------|----------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Psychologist | 3          | 4,130    | 1,466                                       | 1,376                     |

Source: Data Quest and District Data

## Speech and Language Therapists

The district-employed speech and language therapist serves 45 learners from preschool through high school. The speech therapist provides services to preschool learners and five high school age learners. A contracted speech and language therapist serves 15 additional learners. The contract indicates an agreement for \$37,800 worth of services for the 2014-2015 school year. The district speech provider could serve most of the learners who receive services from the private provider. Although the district employee also serves the preschool, the number of learners does not warrant a significant caseload size reduction. The district should determine the efficiency of the caseloads.

| Provider                                     | District Total FTE-to-Caseload Ratio | District Average Caseload Ratio | Ed Code Maximum FTE to Caseload Ratio |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Speech and Language without private provider | 1-to-45                              | 46                              | 1-to-55 (1 to 40 preschool)           |
| Speech and Language with private provider    | 1.4-to-60                            | 42.8                            | 1 to 55 (1 to 40 preschool)           |

Source: California Education Code 56363.3 and district data

## Interpreters for the Deaf

The cost of interpretation for the deaf continues to increase, and the district is one of the most affected in the area. Eight district interpreters serve nine learners, and when these employees are absent, the district contacts an agency for a substitute. The cost for contracted services is greater than the hourly pay of an employee. The table below compares local districts that employ interpreters.

### *Interpreter Cost Comparison*

| District    | 2011-12   | 2012-13   | 2013-14   |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Burton      | 48,217    | 56,970    | 69,145    |
| Dinuba      | 80,803    | 85,763    | 12,561    |
| Exeter      | 115,268   | 44,351    | 6,000     |
| Lindsay     | 214,723   | 342,112   | 401,982   |
| Pixley      | -         | -         | 25,500    |
| Porterville | 220,175   | 291,367   | 357,513   |
| Terra Belle | 25,673    | -         | -         |
| Tulare City | 150,693   | 131,936   | 146,562   |
| Tulare High | 54,374    | 45,449    | 66,625    |
| Visalia     | 324,424   | 295,858   | 336,299   |
| Woodville   | 56,700    | 52,200    | 54,708    |
| Total       | 1,291,050 | 1,346,006 | 1,476,895 |

## Process

The district does not track placements and services provided by the county office for district of residence learners. Knowing the placement and services of every district learner with an IEP is the only way to accurately project costs.

District office staff indicated that the Special Education, Business Services, Human Resources and Curriculum and Instruction departments do not have formal meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to educate the cabinet on special education services and needs, additions or decreases in staff and SELPA updates. The Special Education Department does not provide the other departments with a formal projection spreadsheet of learners, staff, and caseload requirements for the following school year. The special education director prepares a list of staffing, while the Human Resources Department rolls over the staffing for the following year.

Contracts are developed and continued from year to year without requiring budget accountability. The district expends more than \$100,000 per year in special education service contracts developed for related services such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy and substitute interpretation for the deaf. Only one of those contracts falls under nonpublic agency (NPA). An agency is required to be on the state-approved list to be an NPA, ensuring that it meets certain criteria including those pertaining to staffing credentials and insurance.

When a district determines it does not have the appropriate educational placement or related service for a specific learner or cannot hire staff to provide related services to district learners, it may contract with a nonpublic school (NPS) or NPA. The county office SELPA assists with this process by providing NPS and NPA contracts and negotiating rates for its member districts.

## Recommendations

*The district should:*

1. Continue using the current psychologist-to-learner ratio.
2. Reduce education specialist FTEs by 2.5 to three or fund this number of positions through the general fund. This reduction (2.5 FTE) from the special education budget could result in a savings of approximately \$182,068 including salary and benefits.
3. Continue to evaluate service delivery.
4. Consider using only teacher assistant positions, with job description to include toileting and serving any special-needs learner. This could result in a cost savings of at least \$110,000 including salary and benefits.
5. Develop and implement a formal evaluation to determine additional services (adult assistance) and include specific information for frequency and duration of service. The IEP should include an independence place and a transition or “fading” plan for support. Required additional support service should be regularly reviewed.
6. Utilize the contracted speech and language pathologist only for overage of caseload for potential savings of at least \$18,000 per year (three hours per month x 10 learners x 10 months x \$600 = \$18,000, excluding assessment hours and IEP meetings, etc.) The district should consider contracting when needed with a local nonpublic agency certified by the California Department of Education.
7. Consider maximizing speech therapist caseloads to the levels included in the Tulare County SELPA handbook, which is an average of 55.
8. Develop a tracking process of DOR learners receiving services through the county office to ensure fiscal accuracy and need. The director of special education should review placement and services with the county office administration at least quarterly, and documentation of estimated and projected costs should be provided to the CBO quarterly.
9. Develop a process and spreadsheet for annual projections and caseloads and provide it to the HR and Business departments. Schedule monthly or quarterly meetings with Human Resources, Business and Special Education to ensure that staffing information aligns among all three departments.
10. Consider contracting with NPAs for related services for cost effectiveness and more defensible legal coverage as certified through CDE.

## Central Office

The district director of special education is also the director of special projects/student services. This year, half the position was funded from the special education budget and half from the general education budget. This director is responsible for learners age three to 22 who are eligible to receive special education supports and services. Included in the position's responsibilities is the following:

- The hiring and evaluation of special education staff
- Program development
- Curriculum support
- Professional development
- Caseload monitoring
- Compliance
- Budget management
- Parent communication

This director is also responsible for general education duties such as truancy, the School Attendance Review Board, suspensions and expulsions, safety plans, grant writing and implementing grants. The administrator for human resources evaluates the director.

The director has a clerical assistant who also works a split position, assisting the director in special education and performing general education duties. The chart below compares similar district office Student Services and Special Education Department staffing allocations. The clerical staffing indicates that the Lindsay Unified clerical position is less than the compared districts. The clerical assistant is not responsible for tracking budgets or the California Special Education Management Information System (CASEMIS). CASEMIS and budgeting is a significant task; therefore, this may be the rationale for the difference in FTE. The district may want to clarify responsibilities and determine workload.

| Unified School District | Director/Coordinator             | District Program Specialist | Clerical | Enrollment | % Minority | % ELL | Dec. 1, 2013 special ed DOR |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------|------------|------------|-------|-----------------------------|
| Lindsay                 | .59                              | Part time through SELPA     | .50      | 4176       | 94.2       | 28.4  | 205                         |
| Cutler-Orosi            | 1.0                              | Part time through SELPA     | 1.0      | 4133       | 98.5       | 48.2  | 222                         |
| Duarte                  | Asst. Supt. Student Services 1.0 | 1.0                         | 1.0      | 4247       | 91.4       | 23.6  | 540                         |
| Coalinga-Huron          | 1.0                              | 1.0                         | 1.0      | 4355       | 88.3       | 44.8  | 387                         |
| Bassett                 | 1.0                              | 1.0                         | 2.0      | 4138       | 98.5       | 33.8  | 627                         |

*Data from Ed Data 2013-14, Data Quest Dec. 1, 2013 DOR, Direct District contacts*

## Recommendations

*The district should:*

1. Consider dividing coordinated responsibility for general education functions between the Curriculum and Special Education departments.
2. Consider assigning Educational Services to evaluate the director of student services.
3. Consider prioritizing responsibilities to allow time for the director and assistant to develop and monitor the special education budgets and increase their knowledge of CASEMIS information.

## Response to Intervention

Response to Intervention (RtI) is a function of general education not special education. A comprehensive RtI integrates available resources from general education, special education and other areas into a comprehensive system of core subject instruction and interventions to assist every learner (Core Components-RtI2, retrieved from [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov), October 21, 2014).

The process for identifying learners at risk of failure starts with holding a student study team meeting to discuss the learner's needs. Student study teams (SSTs) are a schoolwide approach to early identification and interventions. The team members include the learner when appropriate, parents, learning facilitators, and the site administrator. Together, they identify the learner's strengths and weaknesses and develop an improvement plan that documents how to implement interventions and collect data on the learner's performance. As part of a regular school process, the SST uses a practical improvement plan that all team members agree to follow. The team schedules follow-up meetings to provide continuous research-based strategies and approaches to increase the learner's academic, social, and behavioral experience in school.

Staff indicated that SSTs are not implemented at all district sites because of the implementation of PBS. They also reported that all site administrators have been trained in RtI and PBS; however, the site administrators lack a specific direction on how to use the RtI model. RtI is not implemented at all sites, and implementation at the elementary and middle schools is not consistent. At some sites, the education specialists utilize a "push-in" or "pull-out" model to provide services to at-risk learners during the intervention period.

Since the district is implementing PBS, education specialists should provide interventions to at-risk learners at their level of need and provide interventions based on the RtI model. This school year, the district will implement the Common Core State Standards at K-8 levels. According to the document titled "Superintendent and Governing Board Goals and Priorities for 2014/2015," the goal is as follows:

Complete the full transition to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) through the implementation of the Performance Based System.

Further develop the commitment of all staff in building the Performance Based System by embracing the Strategic Design.

RtI is not implemented at the high-school level, and schools do not use a method of universal screening. Most schools focus on an individual learning plan or PBS.

District staff indicated that RtI is implemented inconsistently as it relates to PBS. The district does not have an RtI leadership team or PBS leadership team at the district level to guide the implementation of the PBS and RtI districtwide. There is no consistent model of RtI, with each school providing its own version or model. Staff members reported that their roles and responsibilities in the RtI model and PBS are also inconsistent. At some sites, the education specialists are intervention specialists and are trained in the Development Reading Assessment (DRA), Science Research Assessment (SRA) reading labs and Read 180 systems, and they are expected to implement these materials during the intervention period and collect data by charting learner progress. At some sites, education specialists and aides attend core subjects for the "push-in" model. They sometimes work with a small group of higher-needs learners outside the class.

Data collection and progress monitoring are also inconsistent in the RtI model and PBS districtwide. The district implements PBS but not RtI at all sites and provides interventions to learners based on their needs. It also follows learner progress through the Web-based system Educate and develops a plan to help learners advance once they show progress.

Additional information on RtI is attached as Appendix A to this report.

## Recommendations

*The district should:*

1. Develop a districtwide consistent SST process to identify learners who need intervention.
2. Develop a districtwide definition, procedures, and policies for the RtI model, and clarify how RtI is included in the performance-based system.
3. Consider establishing a PBS leadership team.
4. Consider finalizing the comprehensive manual (draft) and distribute to all staff.
5. Train staff at least once a year in PBS and how RtI is included in this system.
6. Define the roles and responsibilities of staff in providing interventions/RtI model districtwide.
7. Provide and require districtwide data collection system and progress monitoring as it relates to RtI within the PBS system.

# Identification Rate

## Federal Law Has 13 Disability Classifications

To be eligible for special education services under federal law, students must have a primary disability that falls into one of the 13 categories. Districts are required to educate all students by first providing all services and supports through general education. Overall, 10 percent of California students have disabilities affecting their education, and districts make efforts to keep their identification rates at or below that average.

The district provided the information in the chart below without specific data on district of residence, which alters the percentages. However, this information and data from the California Special Education Management Information System (CASEMIS) indicate that the district of service identification rate is 5.1%, which is low compared to the average state rate of 10% to 12%.

The identification rate in the specific area of intellectual disability is at 17.3% according to district of service data for 2013, with a state average rate of 6.2%.

Although the overall identification rate is lower than the state average rate, there is no formal or consistent process for intervention meetings such as SST procedures as it relates to RtI tiers with data collection within the PBS.

|                              | <b>District of Service<br/>12-1-2013 - 168</b> | <b>District<br/>of Residence<br/>10-1-2014 - 245</b> | <b>County DOR<br/>12-1-2013- 6,818</b> | <b>State 12-1-2013-<br/>705,279</b> |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Intellectual Disability      | 17.3                                           | 25.3                                                 | 19.9                                   | 6.2                                 |
| Hard of Hearing              | 2.4                                            | 1.6                                                  | 2.2                                    | 1.5                                 |
| Deaf                         | 4.2                                            | 3.3                                                  | 0.7                                    | 0.5                                 |
| Speech or Language           | 8.3                                            | 6.9                                                  | 14.6                                   | 22.8                                |
| Visual Impairment            | 0.6                                            | 0.4                                                  | 0.6                                    | 0.6                                 |
| Emotional Disturbance        | 4.8                                            | 2.4                                                  | 2.3                                    | 3.5                                 |
| Orthopedic Impairment        | 1.8                                            | 2.0                                                  | 1.0                                    | 1.8                                 |
| Other Health Impaired        | 4.2                                            | 13.1                                                 | 10.0                                   | 10.1                                |
| Specific Learning Disability | 43.4                                           | 29.4                                                 | 39.4                                   | 40.0                                |
| Deaf/Blindness               | 0                                              | 0                                                    | 0                                      | 0                                   |
| Multiple Disability          | 0.6                                            | 0.4                                                  | 0                                      | 0.9                                 |
| Autism                       | 11.3                                           | 11.0                                                 | 8.5                                    | 12.0                                |
| Traumatic Brain Injury       | 0.6                                            | 0.4                                                  | 0.5                                    | 0.3                                 |

*CASEMIS REPORT Dec. 1, 2013 and district provided data*

## Recommendations

*The district should:*

1. Continue to provide an early intervening service delivery model throughout the district.

2. Research and determine the pathology of intellectual disability category identification.
3. Develop an SST handbook and authentic data collection to determine the next steps in RtI in the PBS and help with early interventions.

# Appendices

- A: Response to Intervention**
- B: Learning Center Model**
- C: Guidelines for Special Circumstance  
Instructional Aides**
- D: Study Agreement**



## Appendix A - Response to Intervention

There is no consistent protocol in place for Response to Intervention in the district. The California Department of Education (CDE) is coining the term Response to Intervention (RtI<sup>2</sup>) to define a general education approach of high-quality instruction and early intervention, prevention, and behavioral strategies. RtI<sup>2</sup> offers a way to eliminate the achievement gap through a school-wide process that provides assistance to every student, both high-achieving and struggling learners. It is a process that utilizes all resources in a school and school district in a collaborative manner to create a single, well-integrated system of instruction and interventions informed by student outcome data. RtI<sup>2</sup> is fully aligned with the research on the effectiveness of early intervention and the recommendations of the California P-16 Council. Access, culture and climate, expectations, and strategies are the council's themes.

On November 14, 2008, the California Department of Education issued the following information regarding RtI<sup>2</sup> as guidance to our schools in California:

### Definition

Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI<sup>2</sup>) is a systematic, data-driven approach to instruction that benefits every student. California has expanded the notion of RtI<sup>2</sup> to communicate the full spectrum of instruction, from general core to supplemental or intensive, to meet the academic and behavioral needs of students. RtI<sup>2</sup> integrates resources from general education, categorical programs, and special education through a comprehensive system of core instruction and interventions to benefit every student.

### Core Components

A cohesive RtI<sup>2</sup> process integrates resources from general education, categorical programs, and special education into a comprehensive system of core instruction and interventions to benefit every student. The following core components are critical to the full implementation of a strong RtI<sup>2</sup> process:

- 1. High-quality classroom instruction.** Students receive high-quality and culturally relevant, standards-based instruction in their classroom setting by highly qualified teachers.
- 2. Research-based instruction.** The instruction that is provided within the classroom is culturally responsive and has been demonstrated to be effective through scientific research.

- 3. Universal screening.** School staff assesses all students to determine students' needs. On the basis of collected data, school staff members determine which students require close progress monitoring, differentiated instruction, additional targeted assessment, a specific research-based intervention, or acceleration.
- 4. Continuous classroom progress monitoring.** The classroom performance of all students is monitored continually within the classroom. In this way, teachers can identify those learners who need more depth and complexity in daily work and those who are not meeting benchmarks or other expected standards and adjust instruction accordingly.
- 5. Research-based interventions.** When monitoring data indicate a student's lack of progress, an appropriate research-based intervention is implemented. The interventions are designed to increase the intensity of the students' instructional experience.
- 6. Progress monitoring during instruction and interventions.** School staff members use progress monitoring data to determine the effectiveness of the acceleration or intervention and make any modifications, as needed. Carefully defined data is collected on a frequent basis to provide a cumulative record of the students' progress, acceleration, and/or response to instruction and intervention.
- 7. Fidelity of program implementation.** Student success in the RtI<sup>2</sup> model requires fidelity of implementation in the delivery of content and instructional strategies specific to the learning and/or behavioral needs of the student.
- 8. Staff development and collaboration.** All school staff members are trained in assessments, data analysis, programs, and research-based instructional practices and strategies. Site grade-level or interdisciplinary teams use a collaborative approach to analyze student data and work together in the development, implementation, and monitoring of the intervention process.
- 9. Parent involvement.** The active participation of parents at all stages of the process is essential to improving the educational outcomes of their students. Parents are kept informed of the progress of their students in their native language or other mode of communication, and their input is valued in making appropriate decisions.
- 10. Specific learning disability determination.** The RtI<sup>2</sup> approach may be one component of the process for determining a specific learning disability as addressed in the IDEA of 2004 statute and regulations. As part of determining eligibility, the data from the RtI<sup>2</sup> process

may be used to ensure that a student has received research-based instruction and interventions.

RtI<sup>2</sup> is to be used in schools in the following three ways:

1. **Prevention.** All students are screened to determine their level of performance in relation to grade-level benchmarks, standards, and potential indicators of academic and behavioral difficulties. Rather than wait for students to fail, schools provide research-based instruction within general education.
2. **Intervention.** Based on frequent progress monitoring, interventions are provided for general education students not progressing at a rate or level of achievement commensurate with their peers. These students are then selected to receive more intense interventions.
3. **Component of specific learning disability (SLD) determination.** The RtI<sup>2</sup> approach can be one component of SLD determination as addressed in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004 statute and regulations. The data from the RtI<sup>2</sup> process may be used to demonstrate that a student has received research-based instruction and interventions as part of the eligibility determination process.

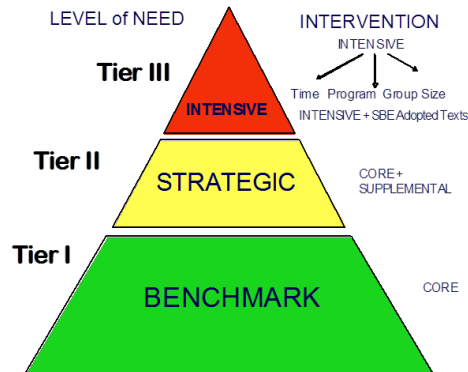


Figure 1

*Tier I. **Benchmark:** Screening and Targeted Instruction*

In Tier I, the focus is on a core instructional program that uses a scientifically validated curriculum with all students in the general education classroom. During the course of

instruction, the school uses universal screening measures to identify each student's level of proficiency in key academic areas. The screening data is organized to enable the review of both group and individual performance on critical measures. Instruction is differentiated in response to this data for small groups and individual students. Students who continue to lag behind their peers despite the provision of targeted instruction may receive additional Tier I instruction or may be considered for more intensive interventions at Tier II.

***Tier II. Strategic: Targeted Short-term Interventions***

In Tier II, supplemental instruction is provided to those students who exhibit a poor response to the targeted instruction provided through Tier I. Tier II intervention is provided in addition to, and not in lieu of, core instruction and can be delivered through an individualized problem-solving approach and/or a standard treatment protocol. (Note: Schools in Program Improvement are required to follow California State Board of Education [SBE] approved intervention regulations.) (See Figure 1.)

A problem-solving approach allows school teams to design individualized interventions to address the specific needs of each student. A standard treatment protocol uses a set of research-based practices to provide interventions in a systematic manner with all participating students who have similar needs. Such interventions are generally highly structured and have a high probability of producing positive results for large numbers of students.

Tier II supplemental interventions may be discontinued for students who improve in critical academic/behavioral measures as a result of the intervention. Some students may exhibit progress but continue to need Tier II supplemental supports. Those students who fail to display meaningful progress in spite of supplemental supports are considered for more intensive interventions in Tier III.

***Tier III. Intensive: Interventions with Increased Intensity***

In Tier III, students receive a greater degree of intensive interventions. Modifications in frequency, duration, or teacher-student ratio or all three are strategies to increase intensity. SBE-approved intervention programs based on research may serve as the core curriculum for students in this intensive level of intervention at fourth grade and above. As in Tier II, interventions are provided flexibly depending on the school site resources and careful blending of all interventions.

Throughout the implementation process of RtI<sup>2</sup>, it will be important for the district to ensure that each staff member understands the definition of systematic change and is able to identify each member's role in the RtI implementation process. In September of 2009, the California Department of Education issued a document titled Determining Specific Learning disability Eligibility Using Response to Intervention and Instruction RtI<sup>2</sup> which provides guidance to LEAs using RtI<sup>2</sup> and describes the collaboration process among all staff members. This document outlined the components of organizational change and defines each staff member's role and responsibilities at the district level and school site level as follows:

## Components of Organizational Change

An RtI<sup>2</sup> approach, with its focus on student outcomes and quality instruction, increases accountability for all learners. Systemic change at the district, site, and classroom levels that impacts instruction, intervention, and identification is necessary due to the focus of RtI<sup>2</sup> on prevention that begins in the general education classroom. A system implementing RtI<sup>2</sup> promotes collaboration and shared responsibility for the learning of all students across all personnel and programs located in a given school (general education, teachers of English language learners, Title 1, special educators/related services providers, administrators, and parents).

Changing a school involves changes at the district level and the school site level. There are unique aspects of an RtI model at the secondary level that will require careful planning and articulation.

### *District Leadership*

Administrative support should accompany the implementation of an RtI<sup>2</sup> approach. This support and commitment should be articulated to the staff along with financial resources necessary to provide:

- Training
- Data collection tools
- Materials
- Time for collaboration

Administrators should build awareness and understanding of the RtI<sup>2</sup> process in their schools as well as ensure training that defines the RtI<sup>2</sup> process, best practices for implementation, and the change in school culture necessary for success. Staff will understand how RtI<sup>2</sup> relates to the mandates of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004 (IDEA).

Administrators should ensure frequent progress monitoring of student learning and behavior, which is central to a well-designed RtI<sup>2</sup> process. Thus, it is essential to have a cost-effective and efficient data collection procedure that everyone can understand, access, and effectively use.

Administrators responsible for curriculum at the district level are ideally suited to work with staff members on the selection of research-based materials that need to be in place across all instructional programs. The California Department of Education (CDE) has a list of, scientific, research-based curricula adopted by the California State Board of Education (SBE) in the area of reading. Districts are mandated to use one or some of these published materials in their general education classrooms. Most, if not all, of these published reading programs have supplemental materials that may be used with students who are in need of additional support.

The district superintendent and school site administrators should provide guidance, adequate time, and support necessary to allow for ongoing collaborative teaming. This may involve a review of the

caseload responsibilities for counselors, reading specialists, speech-language pathologists, psychologists, special educators, and paraeducators to accommodate their changing roles from individual instruction and evaluation to additional professional roles in collaboration, consultation, and modeling. Teams of educators and support staff (within and across grade levels) are responsible for reviewing student progress data and making recommendations for instructional practice.

### ***School Site Leadership***

The following core concepts of the RtI<sup>2</sup> approach should be in place at the school site level in order for implementation to be successful:

- Implement scientific, research-based instruction and intervention.
- Conduct ongoing monitoring of progress that increases in frequency as students demonstrate greater educational need.
- Utilize data derived from multiple sources, including curriculum-based assessment, to inform instruction and intervention.
- Conduct staff development concerning the implementation of RtI<sup>2</sup>.
- Provide information to parents about the RtI<sup>2</sup> process.

School site administrators provide leadership in all levels of the RtI<sup>2</sup> process. They:

- Participate in and provide leadership to school site level teams within and across grade levels.
- Provide for the analysis of school-wide and grade-level trends.
- Support the RtI<sup>2</sup> approach in the school community and with parents.
- Provide support for assessment and instruction at all levels of intervention.
- Ensure the fidelity of instructional delivery through monitoring.

School site leadership teams:

- Examine school-wide trends in behavior and academics that impact student growth.
- Develop a combined targeted intervention and problem-solving/decision-making process to address individual student needs.
- Support ongoing professional development.
- Provide a collaborative systemic approach for the analysis and use of student data.
- Provide a collaborative systemic approach to using scientific, research-based interventions found to be effective with students in the school.

Classroom teachers and support personnel will be part of department teams that analyze:

- Progress-monitoring data to adjust instruction
- Instructional targets in the instructional planning process
- Data from shared assessments

- The fidelity of instructional implementation
- Individual student instructional needs, such as the need for more intensive instruction

All members of the school staff come together in an instructional delivery approach that uses data-based decision making through a problem-solving process involving school professionals and parents. This process involves supports for struggling students in the general education classroom first and careful analysis and communication of the data by the school site teams (within and across departments). Those teams will use data to make decisions about the application of interventions, including their intensity and duration across multiple tiers of intervention. All decisions are driven by data, including decisions such as effective instructional techniques, behavioral supports, appropriate early intervention services, use of research-based strategies, movement between tiers, and when to refer a student for additional assessment.

### **New and Expanding Roles**

School personnel will play a number of important roles in using RtI<sup>2</sup> to provide needed instruction to struggling students as well as assist in identifying students with learning disabilities. These new and expanding roles will require some fundamental changes in the way all educators engage in assessment and intervention activities. Titles may remain the same, but some roles will change in this unified system. Emerging roles may include data managers, team leaders, data specialists, diagnosticians, and intervention specialists.

#### ***Administrators***

It is essential to recognize the importance of leadership in effectively implementing the system changes that an RtI<sup>2</sup> process requires. Administrators will have a critical role in the planning, implementation, and successful use of the RtI<sup>2</sup> process. School site administrators will need to determine the necessary roles and competencies, existing skill levels, and professional development requirements at their sites in order to provide relevant and ongoing training activities and effectively implement RtI<sup>2</sup>.

Additionally, administrators will have to conduct a systematic assessment of the fidelity and integrity with which instruction and interventions are being provided. Working with educators, administrators will develop and utilize protocols for the assessment of fidelity and integrity of instruction and programs for individual students. Administrators will take responsibility for supporting ongoing professional development. The school site administrator assumes an active leadership role on the school site teams that review individual student progress and determine effective interventions. The administrator will ensure that adequate time is allocated for the planning, implementation, and review of the RtI<sup>2</sup> process.

At the district level, superintendents and school boards should be supportive of the changes necessary to implement an RtI<sup>2</sup> process. Effective RtI<sup>2</sup> implementation will require financial and

human resources that will support the professional development and staffing necessary for successful implementation.

Curriculum administrators at the district level can assist with the selection of scientific research-based instructional and intervention materials; develop district-level training for principals, educators, and support providers; and ensure the fidelity and integrity of instruction in the classroom.

### ***General Education Teachers***

Successful implementation of RtI<sup>2</sup> depends on a unified approach to instruction that is supported by everyone in the school. (As schools and districts create and implement RtI<sup>2</sup> processes, general education teachers will be involved in supporting the learning of all students.) A key focus of support emphasizes prevention through early intervention. RtI<sup>2</sup> increases opportunities for teacher collaboration with other members of the educational team and brings timely and relevant supports into classrooms.

General education teachers will work in site-level teams (within and across grade levels) to identify specific student needs using data to make informed decisions that guide instruction for each student. Those teams will use data in an ongoing process for strategic student intervention groupings. Academic and/or behavioral data, collected by grade-level teams, is analyzed throughout the RtI<sup>2</sup> process to measure a pattern of response to high-quality interventions.

### ***Special Education Teachers***

Special education teachers have unique skills that can be used to enhance the learning of all students. With an RtI<sup>2</sup> approach, special educators will have increased opportunities to work with colleagues and students in many different settings. Special education teachers will work as members of site-level teams (within and across grade levels) to identify specific student needs by using data to make informed decisions that guide instruction for each student. Special education teachers will use their specialized knowledge to individualize instruction, build skills, and recommend programs that will meet the needs of individual students.

The student's progression through interventions may suggest the need for more individualized instruction, behavioral intervention, and/or learning supports than are available in the general education curriculum/setting. Special education teachers will be part of a comprehensive evaluation team that gathers student data in order to determine eligibility for special education. Special education teachers working with students identified as having a learning disability and needing special education services will engage in ongoing assessment of those students in order to adjust instruction accordingly.

***Speech-Language Pathologists***

Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) can play a number of roles in an RtI<sup>2</sup> process and provide needed supports to students in both general education and special education settings. The roles will require some fundamental changes in the way that SLPs engage in assessment and intervention activities. SLPs should expand their practice to incorporate prevention and identification of at-risk students who could benefit from speech and language-based interventions as part of the RtI<sup>2</sup> process at the school.

SLPs have expertise specifically in normal, delayed, and disordered development of speech and language skills, which are key to academic and behavioral difficulties. RtI<sup>2</sup> is specifically intended to assist students with academic challenges in literacy as well as behavioral difficulties. The SLP's knowledge of literacy and language-based issues can provide needed and necessary assistance to struggling learners who require intervention but may not be disabled. In an RtI<sup>2</sup> model, SLPs will provide both direct and indirect services to the school team and to students with those types of challenges.

By working both inside and outside the special education system, SLPs can contribute to the overall school program. Some SLPs are using the RtI<sup>2</sup> process to provide speech-only interventions to students with single-sound articulation difficulties and to provide specific interventions to students in need of such services. More specifically, the SLP's expertise will be most beneficial to schools and students in the areas of oral language development, academic literacy, and social skills training.

SLPs are qualified to contribute in a variety of ways in pre-referral interventions, system-wide program design, assessment, intervention, collaboration with colleagues, and directed support of students. They offer expertise in the language basis of literacy and learning, experience with collaborative approaches to instruction/intervention, and an understanding of the use of student outcomes data when instructional decisions are made.

***School Psychologists***

School psychologists can offer expertise at many levels, from system-wide program design through specific assessment and intervention efforts with individual students.

School psychologists help develop, implement, and evaluate new models of service delivery. School psychologists will support the implementation of evidence-based intervention strategies, progress-monitoring methods, problem-solving models, evaluation of instructional and program outcomes, and ecological assessment procedures, directly and indirectly. Their training in assessment is useful to the implementation of technically sound screening and progress-monitoring procedures and the appropriate use of such data. School psychologists also have knowledge regarding program evaluation and understanding of research methods, which will be useful in the development, implementation, and evaluation of evidence-based interventions. Their knowledge of child development, behavior, and principles of learning, coupled with their consultation skills, enables them to be effective members of intervention teams.

In addition to working with other school personnel to consider programmatic options, they plan and conduct comprehensive evaluations to determine eligibility for special education services and the educational needs of the students they serve.

### ***School Counselors***

School counselors bring several important skills to the RtI<sup>2</sup> process. They have a unique central position in the school in that they are involved with the whole school experience/environment. They are aware of the totality of programs and interventions in their school and have ongoing relationships with all the teachers, students, and parents on their caseloads.

The school counselor has skills in communication/consultation that are critical to an effective RtI<sup>2</sup> process. They can act as catalysts to facilitate the RtI<sup>2</sup> process. School counselors' skills in collaboration, problem solving, and consultation will be needed to maintain focus on student needs and the development of effective interventions.

The school counselor's knowledge of child development and the field's emphasis on working with the whole child will be invaluable in developing research-based interventions in the area of social-emotional learning.

### ***Paraeducators***

Paraeducators play an important role in the delivery of interventions to students. As one of the providers of research-based interventions, paraeducators assist general and special educators in providing supplemental and specialized instruction to students. With direction and support from the school-wide team effort, paraeducators work with students in small groups and, in some cases, one-on-one to provide research-based interventions and individualized instruction. They collaborate with other school personnel, such as general education teachers, in data collection and analysis. They perform classroom observations in order to provide relevant information regarding student performance and behavior. Paraeducators participate on school site teams that analyze academic and behavioral data and make decisions. Progress monitoring will measure patterns of response to interventions resulting in positive student outcomes.

### ***Parents and Caregivers***

Parent engagement is a key component of a strong RtI<sup>2</sup> process. Active involvement of parents contributes greatly to improving student outcomes. Parents should be engaged in all aspects of RtI<sup>2</sup>. Schools need to inform parents in their native language and/or mode of communication of the RtI<sup>2</sup> process and ensure that they understand how data will be gathered and used. Parents should be encouraged to actively participate in the RtI<sup>2</sup> process and regularly informed of how their child is responding to interventions. Parents should also have an opportunity to make suggestions and receive access to written intervention plans with details about how the school is helping their student.

## Professional Development

Effective implementation of an RtI<sup>2</sup> process requires that professional development needs are examined so that administrators, teachers, support personnel, and paraeducators possess the requisite skills to implement effective RtI<sup>2</sup>. Successful implementation of RtI<sup>2</sup> depends on the ability of all educators, including paraprofessionals and other specialists, to use RtI<sup>2</sup> practices reliably and with fidelity. The reliability and validity with which RtI<sup>2</sup> practices are implemented will be determined, to a great extent, by the quality of both the pre-service and in-service professional development models used to translate research into effective practice. In-service professional development needs to occur both within and across administrative structures at the state, district, and site levels.

In a tiered intervention model, teachers should implement a wide variety of instructional strategies and conduct ongoing assessment of student progress as a part of their instructional practice. When an effective RtI<sup>2</sup> program is implemented, professional development decisions should be linked to ongoing assessment and student need. Subsequent professional development should be geared toward meeting these identified needs. Teachers will be challenged to examine current practices, hone existing skills, and acquire new knowledge and skills to ensure high-quality targeted instruction. An emphasis on early intervention for preventing school failure is part of an RtI<sup>2</sup> approach.

It is vital to offer continuing, job-embedded professional development that addresses relevant areas essential to effective implementation of RtI<sup>2</sup> and improved student outcomes. Teachers should have opportunities to participate in focused, quality, ongoing professional development relating to RtI<sup>2</sup> processes, procedures, and practices. Based upon identified need, key training issues should include:

- The effective use of screening tools to identify those students who may be at risk of learning difficulties
- Data analysis skills related to screening and placement
- Targeted instructional strategies related to data analysis
- Research-based instructional practices
- Differentiated instruction for a diverse classroom
- Ongoing curriculum-based data collection and analysis
- Evidence-based intervention strategies for both academic and behavior issues
- Progress-monitoring processes and procedures
- Problem-solving methods to facilitate instructional decisions based on data
- Professional collaboration skills
- Appropriate use of accommodations for students with disabilities
- School-wide and individual behavior management and intervention strategies
- Intensive intervention program training
- Standards-based Individualized Education Program (IEP) implementation
- Effective inclusion of students with disabilities in a tiered intervention model

All teachers and specialists involved in providing instruction to students should have the opportunity to participate in ongoing, job-embedded professional development that will support effective research-based instruction with the RtI<sup>2</sup> approach. The California Legislature has created funding for teachers and instructional aides or paraprofessionals teaching math and reading or directly assisting with instruction in math or reading to receive intensive training on the use of the SBE-approved core curriculum (*EC 99230 et seq.*). Special education teachers and paraprofessionals who provide instructional support to students in the core curriculum should also be included in this training along with their general education colleagues. All educators should be trained in the district-adopted intervention program in order to effectively meet the needs of students in the tiered intervention model.

### Conclusion

Effective RtI<sup>2</sup> implementation is based on the belief that everyone is responsible for student learning. The instructional activities, assessment, data gathering and analysis, documentation, and collaboration required for RtI<sup>2</sup> implementation will create new challenges for all education professionals. All educators will need to compile relevant assessment data through continuous progress monitoring and respond appropriately to the findings. School site teams will design, interpret, and assess data as well as suggest instructional approaches. By providing more intensive interventions, educators will utilize a variety of scientific, research-based methods and materials. Administrators will determine needed roles and competencies, existing skill levels, and professional development requirements in order to provide relevant and ongoing training activities in these critical areas.

## Appendix B - Learning Center Model

### Los Angeles Unified School District Division of Special Education

#### Learning Center

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Description           | A shared classroom or classrooms space where varied levels of intervention and support are provided by a diverse group of educators.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Purpose               | <p>The purpose of the learning center is to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide instructional support to students with disabilities.</li> <li>• Provide layers of intervention to students with disabilities and students at risk.</li> <li>• Provide a central location for instructional and supplemental resources to support student learning.</li> <li>• Provide a coordinated system for the provision of support services.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Instructional Support | <p>Drop in center for immediate intervention.<br/>Example: students flow in and out to take tests, receive immediate intervention tied to the classroom, check in with a home base, etc.</p> <p>Specific instruction in educational strategies.<br/>Example: students are pretaught a learning strategy that will be used in content instruction, notetaking, organizational skills, etc. this could take place during advisory or homeroom.</p> <p>Social skill instruction.<br/>Example:</p> <p>Elective class: <i>Developing Reading Skills Across the Curriculum</i><br/>Example; students participate in this class for an elective. They are taught targeted strategies for learning from content material. These may include the REWARDS program, designed to teach a strategy for decoding multi-syllabic words, <i>Makes Sense Strategies</i>, a program designed to support students learning of content material or Skills for School Success.</p> |
| Students served       | <p>Students participating general education classes</p> <p>Any eligibilities</p> <p>Students served through both RS and SDP</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Staff                 | <p>General and special education teachers</p> <p>Coaches, and cadre leaders</p> <p>Paraprofessionals, special and general education</p> <p>DOTs personnel</p> <p>Counselors</p> <p>DIS providers</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Structure             | <p>Aligned with small learning community structure</p> <p>Consolidates resources, puts all materials in one or two central places</p> <p>Provides range of services connected to content curriculum, development of accommodations, fluids supports, intensive supports</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Curriculum            | <p>REWARDS</p> <p>Algebra Ready</p> <p>Skills for School Success</p> <p>Strategies Intervention Models</p> <p>Content Enhancement Strategies</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

Los Angeles Unified School District  
Division of Special Education

School:  
Date:

**Learning Center Effectiveness Indicators**

Identify all items observed.

| <b>Assessment</b>                                                                                                                                         |     |    |                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Indicators                                                                                                                                                | YES | NO | In place                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 1. Diagnostic assessments are in place to identify specific areas of weakness.                                                                            |     |    |                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 2. Ongoing progress monitoring system is in place and used at least weekly.                                                                               |     |    |                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Curriculum</b>                                                                                                                                         |     |    |                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 1. Core curriculum is the foundation of instruction.                                                                                                      |     |    |                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 2. Supplemental materials provided with the core curriculum are being used.                                                                               |     |    |                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 3. Evidence-based intervention materials are used.                                                                                                        |     |    |                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Instruction-Standards-based (60 – 70 % of instructional time)</b>                                                                                      |     |    |                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Indicators                                                                                                                                                | YES | NO | Comments                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 1. Learning strategies and/or advanced graphic organizers are explicitly taught through use of critical teaching behaviors, describe, model and practice. |     |    | If possible, Identify the strategy.                                                                                                                                                  |
| 2. Preteaching or reteaching of content instruction is evident.                                                                                           |     |    |                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 3. Scaffolding of instruction and instructional tools is evident.                                                                                         |     |    |                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 4. Students are actively engaged in the lesson.                                                                                                           |     |    |                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 5. Cooperative learning structure is used.                                                                                                                |     |    | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative learning<br><input type="checkbox"/> Peer assisted learning<br><input type="checkbox"/> Small group structure<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <b>Instruction – Intervention (15 - 20% of instructional time)</b>                                                                                        |     |    |                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 1. Intervention is intentional (performance level) and targeted (short, to the point)                                                                     |     |    |                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 2. Direct instruction in foundational skills is evident.                                                                                                  |     |    | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading<br><input type="checkbox"/> Writing<br><input type="checkbox"/> Math                                                                                |
| <b>Paraprofessionals</b>                                                                                                                                  |     |    |                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 1. Paraprofessionals support individual or small groups of students.                                                                                      |     |    |                                                                                                                                                                                      |

## **Appendix C - Guidelines for Special Circumstance Instructional Aides**

# **Process for Requesting Special Circumstance Instructional Aides**

## **Guidelines and Forms**

Revised 9/1/09

### Guidelines for Requesting Special Circumstance Instructional Assistance

Rationale: Special circumstance instructional assistance (SCIA) may be indicated in situations where additional staff support is needed in the classroom or en route to and from school due to 1) pervasive and aggressive student behaviors directed towards self or others, or 2) intensive student needs.

Factors for review and consideration:

The goal for any special needs student is to encourage, promote, and maximize independence. If not carefully monitored, special circumstance instructional assistance can easily and unintentionally foster dependence. A student's total educational program must be carefully evaluated to determine where support is indicated. Natural support and existing staff support should be used whenever possible to promote the least restrictive environment.

Special factors for students residing in the \_\_\_\_\_:

1. All requests for SCIA shall be submitted to the Director of Special Education. SCIA should not be indicated in individual student IEP's as a service. However, in certain circumstances the need for additional support may need to be indicated in a student's IEP. In those instances, the need shall be indicated in the present levels or meeting notes as "100% supervision."
2. For services requiring additional personnel support as a result of student-related behavioral issues, a positive behavioral support plan or Behavior Intervention Plan should be developed and should include provisions describing how and when the support will be utilized to implement the plan and when the plan will be reviewed and modified, including the fading of SCI Assistance.
3. Observational assessments and team staffings will be conducted on a quarterly basis to evaluate the continued need for SCIA.

Budget coding for additional paraeducator support (classroom and/or transportation):

0100-56400-0-5750-3142-220004-XXXX-XXX  
0100-65000-0-5750-1110-210004-XXXX-XXX

The appropriate code must be entered on all status forms and payroll timesheets.  
The Special Education Department Accountant shall receive a copy of all SCIA requests and shall be notified routinely of all excess costs.

Process for requesting SCI Assistance:

1. Complete the Request for Special Circumstance Instructional Assistance (for Classroom Support and/or Transportation Support).
2. Complete the Observational Evaluation for SCI Assistance (For Individual Student Support only).

3. Complete the Student Needs for Additional Support Rubric (For Classroom Support , Individual Student Support and Transportation Support).
4. Complete the Class Weighting Worksheet (For Classroom Support only).
5. Attach supporting documentation if pertinent (IEP, Behavior Plan, etc.).
6. Submit all paperwork to the Director of Special Education.
7. Upon approval, complete the Request for Long-term Substitute for classroom support and/or an employee status form for transportation support (regular employee ride along).
8. All forms will be disseminated to the Special Education Accountant, Human Resources Department, Program Specialist and Special Education Director.
9. The Special Education Director will assist the site during each quarter to review the need for on-going SCIA classroom and/or transportation support.

**Request for Special Circumstance Instructional Aide****Student-Related: Classroom Support or Individual Student**

Please complete all required information and return to the Special Education Department, Director of Special Education. Notification of approval will be provided to the Program Manager, Special Education Accountant, Finance Department, and Human Resources Department.

*Program* \_\_\_\_\_ *Teacher* \_\_\_\_\_

**Program Specialist** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

Complete 1 or 2:

1. Classroom Support \_\_\_\_\_ Class Location \_\_\_\_\_

2. Individual Student Support \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

**District of Residence** \_\_\_\_\_ **DOB** \_\_\_\_\_

All requests for Special Circumstance Instructional Assistance are reviewed quarterly. Please attach required forms and supporting documentation (Refer to SCIA Guidelines).

*Requested Start Date* \_\_\_\_\_ *Anticipated Ending date* \_\_\_\_\_

Department Approval:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Program Specialist \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Special Education Director/Administrator \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments:**

SCIA Assignment Codes:

0100-56400-0-5750-3142-220004-XXXX-XXX

0100-65000-0-5750-1110-210004-XXXX-XXX

**Enter budget code:**

| FUND | RESOURCE | YEAR | GOAL | FUNCTION | OBJECT | DEPT. | MANAGER |
|------|----------|------|------|----------|--------|-------|---------|
|      |          |      |      |          |        |       |         |

SCIA: rev. 9/10/09

**Request for Special Circumstance Instructional Aide**  
**Student-Related/Transportation Support**

Please complete all required information and return to the Special Education Department, Director of Special Education. Notification of approval will be provided to the Program Manager, Special Education Accountant, Finance Department, and Human Resources Department.

*Program* \_\_\_\_\_ *Teacher* \_\_\_\_\_

**Program Specialist** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student** \_\_\_\_\_ **DOB** \_\_\_\_\_

**District of Residence** \_\_\_\_\_ **Classroom** \_\_\_\_\_

*Requested Start Date* \_\_\_\_\_ *Anticipated Ending date* \_\_\_\_\_

**Transportation Provider (check one):** \_\_\_\_\_ **District of Residence** \_\_\_\_\_ **First Student**

**Rationale for ride-along support:** (Attach additional information/documentation)

-----  
 Department Approval:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Program Specialist \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Special Education Director \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments:**

SCIA Assignment Codes:

0100-56400-0-5750-3142-220004-XXXX-XXX

0100-65000-0-5750-1110-210004-XXXX-XXX

Enter budget code:

| FUND | RESOURCE | YEAR | GOAL | FUNCTION | OBJECT | DEPT. | MANAGER |
|------|----------|------|------|----------|--------|-------|---------|
|      |          |      |      |          |        |       |         |

SCIA: rev. 9/1/09



### Student Needs for Additional Support Rubric

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Disability: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Current Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Select the number that best describes the student in each rubric category that is appropriate.

|          | <b>Health/Personal Care/Rating</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Behavior/Rating</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>Instruction/Rating</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>Inclusion/Mainstreaming/Rating</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>0</b> | General good health. No specialized health care procedure, medications taken, or time for health care. Independently maintains all "age appropriate" personal care.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Follows adult directions without frequent prompts or close supervision. Handles change and redirection. Usually gets along with peers and adults. Seeks out friends.                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Participates fully in whole class instruction. Stays on task during typical instruction activity. Follows direction with few to no additional prompts.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Participate in some core curriculum within general education class and requires few modifications. Can find classroom. Usually socializes well with peers.                                                                                                                            |
| <b>1</b> | Mild or occasional health concerns. Allergies or other chronic health conditions. No specialized health care procedure. Medications administration takes less than 10 minutes time. Needs reminders to complete "age appropriate" personal care activities.                                                                                                                                                   | Follows adult direction but occasionally requires additional encouragement and prompts. Occasional difficulty with peers or adults. Does not always seek out friends but plays if invited.                                                                                                                                                                            | Participates in groups at instructional level but may require additional prompts, cues or reinforcement. Requires reminders to stay on task, follow directions and to remain engaged in learning.                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Participates with modification and accommodation. Needs occasional reminders of room and schedule. Requires some additional support to finish work & be responsible. Needs some social cueing to interact with peers appropriately.                                                   |
| <b>2</b> | Chronic health issues, generic specialized health care procedure. Takes medication. Health care intervention for 10-15 min daily (diet, blood sugar, medication). Requires reminders and additional prompts or limited hands on assistance for washing hands, using bathroom, wiping mouth, shoes, buttons, zippers, etc. Occasional toileting accidents.                                                     | Has problems following directions and behaving appropriately. Can be managed adequately with a classroom behavior management plan, but unable to experience much success without behavior support plan implementation.                                                                                                                                                | Cannot always participate in whole class instruction. Requires smaller groups and frequent verbal prompts, cues or reinforcement. On task about 50% of the time with support. Requires more verbal prompts to follow directions.                                                                                                                                                                             | Participates with visual supervision and occasional verbal prompts. Requires visual shadowing to get to class. Needs modifications & accommodations to benefit from class activities. Regular socialization may require adult facilitation.                                           |
| <b>3</b> | Very specialized health care procedure and medication. Limited mobility. Physical limitations requiring assistance (stander, walker, gait trainer or wheelchair). Special food prep or feeding. Health related interventions 15-45 min. daily. Frequent physical prompts and direction assistance for personal care. Food prep required regularly. Requires toilet schedule, training, direct help diapering. | Serious behavior problems almost daily. Defiant and/or prone to physical aggression. Requires a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) and behavior goals and objectives on the IEP. Requires close visual supervision to implement BIP. Medication for ADD/ADHD or other behaviors.                                                                                        | Difficult to participate in a large group. Requires low student staff ratio, close adult proximity and prompts including physical assistance to stay on task. Primarily complies only with 1:1 directions & monitoring. Cognitive abilities & skills likely require modifications not typical for class as a whole. Needs Discrete Trial, ABA, Structured Teaching, PECS. Requires signing over 80% of time. | Participation may require additional staff for direct instructional and behavioral support. Requires direct supervision going to & from class. Always requires modifications & accommodations for class work. Requires adult to facilitate social interaction with peers.             |
| <b>4</b> | Specialized health care procedure requiring care by specially trained employee (G tube, tracheotomy, catheterization.) Takes medication, requires positioning or bracing multiple times daily. Health related interventions 45 min. daily. Direct assistance with most personal care. Requires two-person lift. Direct 1:1 assistance 45 or more minutes daily.                                               | Serious behavior problems with potential for injury to self and others, runs-away, aggressive on a daily basis. Functional Analysis of Behavior or Hughes Bill has been completed and the student has a well-developed BIP, which must be implemented to allow the student to safely attend school. Staff has been trained in the management of assaultive behaviors. | Cannot participate in a group without constant 1:1 support. Requires constant verbal and physical prompting to stay on task and follow directions. Regularly requires specific 1:1 instructional strategies to benefit from the IEP. Cognitive abilities and skills require significant accommodation and modification not typical for the class group.                                                      | Always requires 1:1 staff in close proximity for direct instruction, safety, mobility or behavior monitoring. Requires 1:1 assistance to go to and from class 80% of the time. Requires adult to facilitate social interaction with peers and remain in close proximity at all times. |

\* Attach a copy of documentation indicating frequency and duration over a period of time to determine further consideration of special circumstance instructional assistance. If mostly ratings of 3's & 4's, in two or more areas, continue with needs assessment process.

## Observational Evaluation for SCI Assistance

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Observer's Name/Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Setting: \_\_\_\_\_

**Section I: Please complete the following review of the visual and physical structure of the classroom, curriculum design, data collection and planning.****Posted classroom schedule** \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, complete section below:

1. The following elements are included in the classroom schedule:

- |                                      |                                     |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Times       | <input type="checkbox"/> Locations  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Students    | <input type="checkbox"/> Activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Staff names |                                     |

2. The schedule is ☐ Daily ☐ Weekly ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_**Individual student schedule** \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, complete section below:

1. Student uses the following format for individualized schedule:

- |                                     |                               |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Object     | <input type="checkbox"/> Icon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Photograph | <input type="checkbox"/> Word |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Picture    |                               |

2. Room is arranged with structure to correlate with tasks on schedule:

- |                                                   |                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Area for one-to-one work | <input type="checkbox"/> Area for independent work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Area for group work      | <input type="checkbox"/> Area for leisure          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable           |                                                    |

3. Student ability to follow the schedule:

- |                                                                           |                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Independent                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> With direct verbal prompt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-verbal with gestural prompt                  | <input type="checkbox"/> With physical prompt      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> With indirect verbal prompt                      |                                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Inconsistent |                                                    |

4. Student use of the schedule:

- |                                                                           |                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student carries schedule                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Student uses transition cards          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student goes to schedule board                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher carries and shows the schedule |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consistent <input type="checkbox"/> Inconsistent |                                                                 |

**\*Attach sample classroom schedule and individual student schedule****Curriculum and instructional planning**

1. Check the curricular domains included in the student's program:

- |                                        |                                                |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communication | <input type="checkbox"/> Academics             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self care     | <input type="checkbox"/> Motor skills/mobility |

- ☐ Domestic  
☐ Social/behavioral  
☐ Pre-vocational/vocational

- ☐ Recreation/leisure  
☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Describe curricular accommodations and/or modifications currently being used:
3. List equipment or devices used /available that may relate to the need for assistance (may be low incidence equipment or assistive technology device):
4. Are materials and activities age appropriate? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
5. Are materials and activities instructionally appropriate? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

***Current data systems and collection of data***

*Has data been collected on student performance?* \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, complete section below:

1. Current data on each objective includes:

- ☐ Date  
☐ Task

- ☐ Level of independence (prompting needed)

2. Data is collected:

- ☐ Daily  
☐ Weekly

- ☐ Biweekly  
☐ Monthly

3. Data is summarized in the following manner:

- ☐ Graphed  
☐ Written narrative

- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

***\*Attach sample***

***Behavior and safety***

1. Describe the behavior management system in the classroom, including positive reinforcers and consequences. Is the system appropriate for the student or does it need modification?
2. Are specific positive behavior supports utilized for the student? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No  
Describe:
3. Is there appropriate safety equipment in place? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No
4. Are appropriate safety and medical procedures being used? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No
5. Does it appear appropriate training has been provided? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

Comments:

6. Describe the student's interactions with peers:
7. Describe the student's interaction with non-classroom staff in a less structured environment:
8. What activities does the student choose during breaks?
9. What problems are evident?

***Planning team meetings***

1. Are team meetings held? (formal or informal meetings to problem solve) \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

If yes, complete section below:

- |                                              |                                   |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Daily               | <input type="checkbox"/> Biweekly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly              | <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Need to be schedule |                                   |

Meetings include the following participants:

***Current utilization of assistance***

How is existing assistance utilized?

- |                                                                |                                             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Behavior management                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical assistance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum adaptation and preparation | <input type="checkbox"/> Supervision        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Instruction - individual              |                                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Instruction - group                   | <input type="checkbox"/>                    |

Other \_\_\_\_\_

***Team Summary/Action Plan***

1. Can current conditions be modified to meet the student's goals and objectives and/or personal care needs? If so, how?
  
2. What other types of assistance are needed? Why?
  
3. Are there any other issues that need to be addressed?
  
4. Recommendations:

## Techniques to Promote Independence and Fading of Support

1. Watch before assisting. Can the student ask for help from teacher or peer?
2. Can the student problem solve independently?
3. Give the student extra time to process and respond before assisting.
4. Provide consistent classroom schedule (posted, visual, at desk if needed, reinforcement periods included). Teach the student how to use it.
5. Start with the least intrusive prompts to get the student to respond:
  - A. Gestural, hand or facial signals
  - B. Timer
  - C. Verbal
  - D. Light physical
  - E. Hand over hand
6. Prompt, then back away to allow independent time.
7. Use strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes to motivate student participation and interest.
8. Model; guide (watch and assist); check (leave and check back).
9. Teach independence skills (raising hand, asking for help, modeling other students).
10. Praise for independent attempts.
11. Direct the student to answer to the teacher.
12. Prompt the student to listen to the teacher's instructions. Repeat only when necessary.
13. Encourage age appropriate work habits. See what other students are doing.
14. Be aware of proximity. Sit with the student only when necessary.
15. Encourage peer assistance and partnering. Teach peers how to help, not enable.
16. Utilize self-monitoring checklists for student.
17. Color code materials to assist with organization.
18. Use transition objects to help the student anticipate/complete transition (i.e., head phones for listening center).
19. Break big tasks into steps.
20. Use backward chaining (i.e., leave the last portion of a cutting task for the student, then gradually lengthen the task).
21. Assist in encouraging a means for independent communication (i.e., PECS).
22. Provide positive feedback (be specific to the situation).
23. Ask facilitative questions ("What comes next?" "What are other students doing?" "What does the schedule say?" "What did the teacher say?").
24. Give choices.

## **Instructional Aide Guidelines**

### **I. GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

#### **A. Rationale**

SELPA is committed to providing a full continuum of placement options for students with identified disabilities who are receiving special education services. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA2004) and California laws and regulations describe a continuum of alternative placements such as instruction in general education classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction and instruction in hospitals and institutions. Both federal and state laws contain provisions to ensure that children with disabilities are educated to the maximum extent possible with children who are not disabled and that children are removed from the general education environment only when the nature of the disability is such that education in the general education classroom cannot be satisfactorily achieved with the use of related services.

#### **B. Related Services**

California's related services as defined in Education Code and Title V regulations are referred to as Designated Instruction and Services or DIS. IDEA2004 defines Related Services as signifying the utilization of aids, services, and other supports that are provided in general education classes or other education-related settings to enable children with disabilities to be educated with non-disabled children to the maximum extent appropriate. This applies to any general education program or special education program in which the student may participate.

#### **C. Special Needs Assistant/Support**

By law, services to students with special needs must be delivered in the least restrictive environment (LRE). When an IEP Team is considering a special needs assistant for a student, all aspects of the student's program must be considered with the intent of maximizing the student's independence. It must be acknowledged that the teacher, rather than the assistant, is responsible for the design and implementation of the student's program. The IEP team must consider the student's personal independence when discussing the necessity for a special needs assistant. The foremost educational goal for any special needs student is to encourage, promote, and maximize independence. Without proper consideration of the role of a special needs assistant, the presence of such support may unintentionally foster dependence. The team must carefully evaluate a student's total educational program to determine where support is indicated. Natural support, existing staff support, and/or other classroom modifications/supports (e.g. assistive technology, behavior plan) should be used whenever possible to promote the least restrictive environment (LRE).

#### **D. Other considerations**

- The IEP Team needs to base the decision for a special needs assistant as a related service on appropriate documentation and assessment. A special needs assistant is considered only in instances where the student is not able to

benefit from a Free and Appropriate Public Education without such support. Specifically the program modifications or supports for school personnel (special needs assistant) are necessary to assist the student to:

- ◆ Advance appropriately toward the annual goals
  - ◆ Be involved in and progress in the general curriculum
  - ◆ Participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities; and,
  - ◆ Be educated and participate with other disabled and non-disabled students.
- If a special needs assistant is necessary for curricular purposes, the IEP Team must consider if the current goals and objectives are appropriate and if the proposed placement is truly the least restrictive environment for the child.
  - If a special needs assistant is necessary for behavioral concerns, the IEP Team must have charted behaviors and implemented an appropriate behavior plan before they consider a special needs assistant.
  - The school nurse should be a part of the IEP Team discussion whenever assistance is needed due to a medical need.

## **II. PROCEDURES/ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES**

### **A. Complete an Evaluation**

Members of the school education team need to complete the Evaluation to determine the Appropriateness for a Special Needs Aide form to evaluate the need for additional classroom support.

### **B. Schedule IEP Meeting**

If, after completing the form, it is determined that a special needs assistant (for the classroom or for a specific student) is needed, an IEP meeting should be scheduled and should include an appropriate district of residence administrator/designee.

### **C. The IEP needs to include the following:**

1. A statement that the special needs assistant is necessary for the child to benefit from his/her educational program with a specific statement of how the related service will assist the child. Specify the conditions and circumstances under which the special needs assistant appears appropriate for the student.
2. An objective manner (criteria) for evaluating whether the addition of personnel assists the child in benefiting from his/her educational program.
3. A statement of the frequency and location of the related service(s).
4. A statement of the duration of the services. A short-term special needs assistant could be used for an evaluation period or transition period not to exceed eight weeks.
5. A statement of the role of the special needs assistant as well as the role of the teacher and any other professionals responsible for the student's education.

6. A systematic written plan to address how the additional personnel support will be monitored and to address the criteria for fading that support as the student gains independence.
7. The schedule for review of the student's program which leads to the fading of the assistant. It is recommended that the team meet at least every six months except for cases of extreme medical need.
8. Goals/objectives that address the skills needed by the child in order for the special needs assistant to be faded.
9. A behavior plan for a student requiring a special needs assistant for behavior. The behavior plan needs to include a description of how and when support, including personnel, will be utilized to implement the plan and when the plan will be reviewed and modified.
10. If the student has instructional needs requiring additional personnel, a written plan must be developed by the general and/or special education teacher(s) based on appropriate assessment information. The plan must specify how the additional personnel will be utilized to support the teacher in implementing the student's goals and objectives. Additionally, the plan must indicate what attempts will be made to transition to other available classroom resources and supports. (timeline, criteria, and specific resources and supports)

#### Evaluation to Determine the Appropriateness for a Special Needs Aide

|                        |  |              |  |
|------------------------|--|--------------|--|
| Date:                  |  |              |  |
| Student:               |  | Grade:       |  |
| Teacher:               |  | Title:       |  |
| School Site:           |  | Room Number: |  |
| Instructional Setting: |  |              |  |

*When completing the form, please use the back pages of the form as necessary to give complete information.*

#### A. Curriculum and Instructional Planning

1. Check the curricular domains included in the student's IEP:

\_\_\_ Communication

\_\_\_ Academic/Pre-academic

☐ Self-Care ☐ Behavior  
☐ Pre-vocational, Vocational ☐ Motor skills/Mobility  
☐ Other (specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

2. Is the student currently making progress towards the IEP goals?

☐ Yes (all) ☐ Yes (some) ☐ No

3. If limited or no progress is being made, what factors are responsible for this?

4. Describe all interventions attempted including the duration of the intervention and the success or lack of success for each intervention.

5. List equipment or devices used that may relate to the need for assistance.

6. Describe reinforcers and reinforcement schedule used.

7. List materials and activities being used as part of the student's instructional program.

8. Does the student have behaviors that negatively impact the learning environment for other students? (Please include all documentation of attempts to reduce the behavior including a behavior plan.)

## **B. Classroom Environment**

1. Attach a diagram of the arrangement of the furniture and instructional areas that provide the physical structure of the classroom. Does the physical environment of the classroom present barriers to the student's participation in the curriculum? If yes, how?

1. Describe the classroom schedule and visual supports provided for the student.

2. Describe the classroom management system.

Are the visual structures in place enough to meet the student's needs? If no, what else is needed? Is the current classroom management system working for the student? If no, what else is needed?

3. Are distractions occurring in the classroom that interfere with student learning? If yes, what are they?

### **C. Determining Student Access to the Curriculum**

1. What part(s) of the curriculum is accessible to the student given the natural or available supports?
2. What part(s) of the curriculum is not accessible given the natural or available supports?

What factors prevent the student's participation in this aspect of the curriculum?

**D. Determining Available Supports**

1. What supports (personnel, environmental, structural, instructional) are available for the student in the natural environment?
  
2. Describe other school personnel that might be available to support the student's needs? (classroom teacher, special education teacher, special education paraprofessional, other school instructional aides, peer support, etc.)
  
3. Describe other modifications or supports that might be considered for the student that have not been tried. (change of classroom environment, classroom management plan, individual behavior plan, assistive technology)
  
4. Please check any intervention below that might be helpful to try before consideration of a **special needs aide**.
  - a. \_\_\_\_ Training for instructional staff (specify what type)
  - b. \_\_\_\_ In class coaching
  - c. \_\_\_\_ Consultation in the classroom
  - d. \_\_\_\_ Behavior observation/support
  - e. \_\_\_\_ Other (please specify)
  
5. If a **special needs aide** is being contemplated, does the assistant need to be assigned to one student or could the assistant be assigned to the entire class?
  
6. Specify exactly what times during the day the student could participate without the support of the **special needs aide**.

| Time of Day | Activity |
|-------------|----------|
|             |          |
|             |          |
|             |          |

If a **special needs aide** is contemplated for this student, what part(s) of the day would the student require support? What type of support would be given?

| Time of Day | Activity | Anticipated Support |
|-------------|----------|---------------------|
|             |          |                     |
|             |          |                     |
|             |          |                     |
|             |          |                     |
|             |          |                     |

#### E. Determining the Need for Assistance

\_\_\_\_\_ The student is able to access the curriculum in the least restrictive environment with supports currently available in the school environment.

\_\_\_\_\_ The student is not able to access the curriculum in the least restrictive environment using natural and/or available supports for the following reason(s):

\_\_\_\_\_ Intensive medical need (attach documentation)

\_\_\_\_\_ Serious behavior (attach documentation of attempted interventions and current behavior plan)

\_\_\_\_\_ Low Incidence needs (scribe, sign language translator, notetaker, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Basic life function assistance

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (curricular, mobility, etc.)

Specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D - Study Agreement



CSIS California School Information Services

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### FISCAL CRISIS & MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM STUDY AGREEMENT August 5, 2014

The Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT), hereinafter referred to as the team, and the Lindsay Unified School District, hereinafter referred to as the district, mutually agree as follows:

#### 1. BASIS OF AGREEMENT

The team provides a variety of services to school districts and county offices of education upon request. The district has requested that the team assign professionals to study specific aspects of the district's operations. These professionals may include staff of the team, county offices of education, the California State Department of Education, school districts, or private contractors. All work shall be performed in accordance with the terms and conditions of this agreement.

In keeping with the provisions of Assembly Bill 1200, the county superintendent will be notified of this agreement between the district and FCMAT and will receive a copy of the final report. The final report will also be published on the FCMAT website.

#### 2. SCOPE OF THE WORK

##### A. Scope and Objectives of the Study

1. Conduct a comprehensive review of the special education delivery system for preschool through grade 12 and determine how the program can be more cost efficient. Review the learning center model.
2. Make recommendations to reduce the contributions from the unrestricted general fund while maintaining the quality of services and meeting legal requirements.
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the staffing process for certificated staff and classroom aides, including class size ratios, and provide recommendations as needed. This will include all certificated staff such as teachers, speech, psychologists, adaptive physical education teachers, and occupational therapists.

4. Compare the district's central office special education department staffing to evaluate and ensure that effective clerical, program, functional and administrative support are aligned with those of districts of comparable size and structure. The team will compare three to six similarly-sized districts by using the Ed Data website or specific districts selected by the district, and will make recommendations to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
5. Review the district's implementation of Response to Intervention (RtI.) and provide recommendations as needed.
6. Determine whether the district is over identifying students for special education services compared to statewide average, and make recommendations that will reduce over identification, if needed.

B. Services and Products to be Provided

1. Orientation Meeting - The team will conduct an orientation session at the district to brief district management and supervisory personnel on the team's procedures and the purpose and schedule of the study.
2. On-site Review - The team will conduct an on-site review at the district office and at school sites if necessary.
3. Exit Report - The team will hold an exit meeting at the conclusion of the on-site review to inform the district of significant findings and recommendations to that point.
4. Exit Letter – Approximately 10 days after the exit meeting, the team will issue an exit letter briefly summarizing significant findings and recommendations to date and memorializing the topics discussed in the exit meeting.
5. Draft Reports - Electronic copies of a preliminary draft report will be delivered to the district's administration for review and comment.
6. Final Report - Electronic copies of the final report will be delivered to the district's administration and to the county superintendent following completion of the review. Printed copies are available from FCMAT upon request.
7. Follow-Up Support – If requested, FCMAT will return to the district at no cost six months after completion of the study to assess the district's progress in implementing the recommendations included in the report. Progress in implementing the recommendations will be documented to the district in a FCMAT management letter.

### 3. PROJECT PERSONNEL

The study team will be supervised by William Gillaspie, Ed.D., FCMAT Deputy Administrative Officer, Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team, Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office. The study team may also include:

- A. William Gillaspie, Ed.D. FCMAT Deputy Administrative Officer, Project Lead
- B. Donald Dennison FCMAT Consultant
- C. Jackie Kirk Martinez FCMAT Consultant
- D. Keith Butler FCMAT Consultant
- E. Mariam Galvarin FCMAT Consultant

Other equally qualified staff or consultants will be substituted in the event one of the above individuals is unable to participate in the study.

### 4. PROJECT COSTS

The cost for studies requested pursuant to E.C. 42127.8(d)(1) shall be as follows:

- A. \$500 per day for each staff member while on site, conducting fieldwork at other locations, preparing and presenting reports, or participating in meetings. The cost of independent FCMAT consultants will be billed at their actual daily rate.
- B. All out-of-pocket expenses, including travel, meals and lodging.
- C. The district will be invoiced at actual costs, with 50% of the estimated cost due following the completion of the on-site review and the remaining amount due upon the district's acceptance of the final report.

**Based on the elements noted in section 2 A, the total estimated cost of the study will be \$20,000.**

- D. Any change to the scope will affect the estimate of total cost.

Payments for FCMAT's services are payable to Kern County Superintendent of Schools - Administrative Agent.

## 5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DISTRICT

- A. The district will provide office and conference room space during on-site reviews.
- B. The district will provide the following if requested:
  - 1. Policies, regulations and prior reports that address the study scope.
  - 2. Current or proposed organizational charts.
  - 3. Current and two prior years' audit reports.
  - 4. Any documents requested on a supplemental list. Documents requested on the supplemental list should be provided to FCMAT only in electronic format; if only hard copies are available, they should be scanned by the district and sent to FCMAT in electronic format.
  - 5. Documents should be provided in advance of field work; any delay in the receipt of the requested documents may affect the start date of the project. Upon approval of the signed study agreement, access will be provided to FCMAT's online SharePoint document repository, where the district will upload all requested documents.
- C. The district's administration will review a preliminary draft copy of the report resulting from the study. Any comments regarding the accuracy of the data presented in the report or the practicability of the recommendations will be reviewed with the team prior to completion of the final report.

Pursuant to EC 45125.1(c), representatives of FCMAT will have limited contact with pupils. The district shall take appropriate steps to comply with EC 45125.1(c).

## 6. PROJECT SCHEDULE

The following schedule outlines the planned completion dates for different phases of the study:

|                               |                                |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Orientation:                  | October 21, 2014               |
| Staff Interviews:             | to be determined               |
| Exit Meeting:                 | to be determined               |
| Preliminary Report Submitted: | to be determined               |
| Final Report Submitted:       | to be determined               |
| Board Presentation:           | to be determined, if requested |
| Follow-Up Support:            | if requested                   |

7. CONTACT PERSON

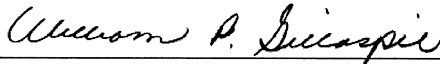
Name: Grant Schimelpfening  
Telephone: (559) 562-5111 x5113  
E-mail: [gschimelpfening@lindsay.k12.ca.us](mailto:gschimelpfening@lindsay.k12.ca.us)

*Board Approved*

AUG 25 2014

  
Thomas Rooney, Superintendent  
Lindsay Unified School District

Date *Lindsay Unified S.D.*

  
William P. Gillaspie, Ed.D.  
Deputy Administrative Officer  
Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team

August 5, 2014

Date