AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Department of Special Education

Guidance Document
Special Education Staffing Strategies

G01: Special Education Staffing Strategies
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Revision:

Question: How can I make the best use of the existing staff to ensure the IEP needs of students are met?

Answer – Consider strategies listed below:

- Special Education Teachers:
  - Broaden assignment of special education teachers when possible. "You are not a resource language arts teacher only. You are a special education teacher who will be assigned according to student needs. You may be in different classes, serving different students during the school day."
  - Cross train all special education teachers to support non- categorical use of special education staff.
    - Identify the training in E-campus that would be beneficial for all special education and general education teachers. When you see training for autism, don't send only the SCORES teacher. Send the behavior and resource/inclusion special education teachers. Send general education teachers.
    - Assign staff the Stetson on line courses (50 licenses for each elem., 75 MS, 100 HS).
    - Use the training resume to document the training.
    - Ensure special education teachers are attending all general education campus trainings.
    - Utilize experts on your campus to provide the training.
    - Assign special education master teachers to provide embedded, onsite training in accommodations, modifications, behavioral supports to other campus staff.
    - Assign special education teachers to attend trainings outside of their standard training areas.
  - During student instructional day, assign all special education staff for IEP designated roles only: minimal to no coaching periods, clerical periods, and/or other duty assignments. (Note allowable cost requirements do not allow staff funded with special education local OR federal dollars to serve in general education roles – i.e. Coaching a sport, teaching a general education class as the general education teacher of record).
  - Do not assign special education teachers to be the teacher of record for a general education class or for a campus wide learning lab.
  - Support special education department clerical responsibilities through campus administrative and clerical staff.

- General Education teachers:
    - Review certification of all general education teachers. If any have special education certification, consider part day assignments to meet special education needs (inclusion, resource).
    - Assign general education master teachers to provide job embedded, onsite training to special education staff in rigorous content instruction.
    - Assign general education teachers to attend trainings outside of their standard training areas.

- Paraprofessionals: The greatest inefficiency in special education as identified by 3 external review teams is the overuse of intensive adult supports (formerly called 1:1 TA).
    - Analyze specific student needs in small increments of time throughout the student day to identify times support is needed and not needed (peer, adult).
    - Utilize the adult supports in other areas when not needed for individual students.
    - Utilize paraprofessionals for inclusion versus teachers when able.
    - Provide information to staff on inadvertent detrimental use of paraprofessionals (see attached).
    - Broaden assignment of special education paras when possible. "You are not a life skills para only. You are a special education para who will be assigned according to student needs. You may be in different classes, serving different students during the school day."
    - Assign paraprofessional to attend trainings outside of their standard training areas.

- Master Schedule:
    - Schedule special education students first in the master schedule.
    - Adjust master schedule to optimize grouping of students to maximize staff coverage.
    - Schedule common planning time for general and special education teachers.
    - Conduct periodic review of staff schedules to ensure staff assignments monitor and adjust as necessary to fill in any campus changing needs.
    - Schedule social skills IEP instruction with larger heterogeneous groups.
    - Attend the ½ day 'Responsible Scheduling' training at Clifton Center Feb. 21 – Register on E-campus.
    - If enrolled grade level specials classes (PE, art, music etc) are not possible, assign special education students to a general education class one grade level above or below their enrolled grade level.
    - Schedule common planning time for general and special education teachers.

- ARD Decision Making:
    - Review all students' schedule to determine if supports being provided are in excess of IEP requirements.
    - Ensure ARD is not identifying supports available to all students (for example: do not check 'read test aloud' if the teachers practice this for all students).
    - Identify and teach skills in specialized support settings that will lead to greater independence in a general education setting.