



**Prescott Unified
School District**

The Smart Choice

Child Study Services Team



Mission Possible

Special Education Improvement Report

July 21, 2010

2010-2011 Board Retreat

The following highlighted accomplishments were completed during the 2009-2010 school year by your Special Education team. We present these for your review.

At the beginning of last year there were several active legal and compliance issues. We are happy to report that all of these issues, with the exception of one, have been successfully resolved.

The Special Education Improvement Team identified issues of concern for different stakeholder groups in the district. A major concern identified by the Team was ineffective communication. Also, the Team indicated a need for more frequent and effective trainings.

We implemented monthly stakeholder group meetings to improve and facilitate effective communication throughout the district. We also have been working to establish strong collaborative relationships with Site Administrators and a number of parents. Our goal is to rebuild confidence and trust in this department.

Monthly stakeholder group meetings were utilized to provide guidance and collaboration on improving instruction for students with special needs as well as legal compliance. This time was also used for team-building and understanding the important role special education plays in the education of our students.

We instituted a series of meetings between sending and receiving schools at the end of the year to facilitate students transitioning to a new setting.

Child Study Services (CSS) offered many training opportunities district-wide last year covering a variety of topics of special concern and interest. These training courses were offered to all staff. Some were also offered to parents, and were well received by all.

The Team compiled a "Top Ten" list of concepts relating to Special Education in P.U.S.D. and brainstormed ideas for making a future video about these ideas.

CSS collaboratively developed and updated the Policies and Procedures Manual for best practices in Special Education. The new manual will be distributed and implemented this school year.

We have been working diligently to recruit and retain high quality personnel to provide the necessary services for our students. CSS instituted some personnel reorganization

within the Special Education department. We created a Lead Psychologist position, Lead Speech position, Assistive Technology Coordinator position, and a half-time Compliance Monitor position. These changes have made a dramatic difference in compliance and accountability, and have helped to rebuild trusting relationships with staff and parents.

One of our major goals is to significantly reduce the number of 1:1 paraprofessionals currently servicing our students. Through stimulus funds we were able to implement an Assistive Technology Library for our district. It is our hope that this technology will help to level the playing field for our students with special needs and promote independence.

We were able to provide a much more appropriate classroom for the B.E.S.T. program at PHS. We celebrated by holding a public open-house and received a positive write up in the newspaper. This group of students can now learn basic living skills inside their classroom with sufficient room for all activities and necessary equipment.

Throughout last year our district underwent on-site monitoring with the Arizona Department of Education. The monitoring process consisted of several parts. Surveys were sent to parents, staff and administrators to record perceptions of special education services in our district. ADE did personal interviews with all administrators and the CSS Director. The actual review of files was conducted by a team comprised of district personnel as well as ADE monitors. At the end of the review our team was given a Summary of Findings report that was presented to the Leadership Team. There were several items that had to be corrected within 60 days or funds would have been withheld. **I am happy to say that all of these items were completed satisfactorily, and our department received a commendation from ADE!** The Summary of Findings also includes additional Corrective Actions which must be completed by the end of this school year.

2010-2011 Special Education Goals

Complete all parts of the Corrective Action Plan to effectively close out the monitoring process.

Train all staff on implementation of new policies and procedures developed in the new manual.

Director will participate in at least one professional development session at each site each quarter to educate all staff regarding their role in the special education process.

Train all staff on proactive strategies for facilitating IEP meetings that are compliant, and build cooperative rather than adversarial relationships with parents.

Work with Leadership Team to carve out time for “job-alike” professional development time each quarter to focus on curriculum and instruction for students with special needs.

Start a parent group that will meet regularly to further facilitate collaboration and communication.

Work closely with Curriculum Coordinator to offer professional development opportunities applicable to all staff.

We will work to become a model for Special Education Departments throughout Arizona.

Top Ten Ideals about Special Education

- 1. Special Education is not a location.**
- 2. Special Education and General Education are inter-related.**
- 3. Accommodations are not optional.**
- 4. Parents are our partners.**
- 5. “Because we have always done it this way,” is not a good enough reason.**
- 6. Paraprofessionals are a resource that must be utilized strategically.**
- 7. We all need to learn how to see through someone else’s eyes.**
- 8. We must be proactive in providing interventions and assistance.**
- 9. We must provide accurate reporting of student progress as a team.**
- 10. Differentiation for ALL, Learning for ALL.**

Assistive Technology

I am very excited to tell you about the new Assistive Technology Library which was set up this summer. The Assistive Technology Library is located in room 100 of the Child Study Services offices. Child Study Services has spent \$100,000.00 so far on assistive technology.

We are also assembling an Assistive Technology Team this upcoming school year. This team will consist of the Special Education Director, Assistive Technology Coordinator, a School Psychologist, General Education Teacher, and a Special Education Teacher. The AT Team will be grant funded and they will be going to a 2 day training each month. This team will be excited to learn all about the different techniques and devices available on the market for assistive technology.

We are looking forward to an Assistive Technology friendly Prescott Unified School District with a mission to level the playing field for all students within our district.

“For some people technology makes things easier. For people with disabilities, technology makes things possible.”

-Mary Pat Radabough, 1990

2009-2010 Training Opportunities

Event	Speaker	Date
Training of Trainers IEzP Program		Nov 12, 2009
Functional Behavior Assessments	Dr. Joe Gentry & Carey Burgess	Nov 18, 2009
Prior Written Notice Training	Dr. Joe Gentry	
Think Aspergers Project	Elena Pollard / SARRC	Dec 9, 2009
Assistive Technology	Bruce Kennedy	Jan 27, 2010
Transition Svcs for Graduating Students	Joe Guitia / DDD	Jan 27, 2010 & Feb 3, 2010
Warning Signs of Dyslexia	Susan Barton / Bright Solutions	Feb 8, 2010
Data Collection	Dr. Kristen Gaisford / Autism & Educational Services	Feb 10, 2010
Transition Training	Bill McQueary / ADE	Feb 23, 2010 & Mar 24, 2010
Problem Behavior	Dr. Kristen Gaisford / Autism & Educational Services	March 10, 2010
Beginning with the End in Mind: Secondary Transition	Allison Meritt / ADE	March 31, 2010
Prior Written Notice Training	ADE Staff	April 22, 2010