

December 21, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians of IEP Learners,

First, our district Special Education District Team wishes you and your family a **wonderful holiday**.

We have been quite busy. Although not a comprehensive list, highlights for our work follows. Also included in the list are parent meetings.

Testing and Evaluation: A contract has been completed with a non-public agency (NPA), called the "Evaluation Group" to assist with catching up evaluations. Assessments are being completed as quickly as possible and in chronological order. If parents have questions on the status of their student's evaluation, an e-mail may be forwarded to me.

Learning Hubs: The district hoped to provide these opportunities sooner, but health conditions have fluctuated. Student health and safety is most important. As shared in the Board meetings, health conditions will again be reviewed after the holidays to determine if schools can open. Individual learning needs of students in moderate severe (M/S), special day class (SDC), counseling enriched classrooms (CEC) and those with significant distance learning access challenges are being reviewed with school-based teams to prepare.

IEPs/IAPs: The IEP Aligned Plan (IAP), or contingency plan, may be adjusted to meet Distance Learning needs that fluctuate. Contact your case manager if you wish to address the plan. The IAP is also reviewed in IEP meetings to make adjustments. The IEP addresses ongoing instructional needs. Since the beginning of summer, the district has decreased overdue IEPs resulting from sheltering in place significantly, meeting the state criteria to reduce by 20% each month. If parents wish to know when their IEPs will be held, contact your case manager. Parents may request drafted materials ahead of time by contacting their case manager.

Progress Reports: Progress reports on IEP goals and benchmarks should have been received by now for all goals unless the goal was recently updated in this current second quarter. Please understand that when IEP goals are not consented to, staff are encouraged to work with you to reach consensus. The district is permitted to instruct on those goals for which they have consent. Contact your case manager and/or site administrator if you did not receive progress reports.

Staff Professional Development:

1. Paraprofessionals, M/S teachers, SDC teachers and CEC teachers participated in a training on principles of positive behavior support to increase student engagement and safety behaviors.
2. An IEP goal-writing seminar was made available to staff.
3. All staff participated in training on progress monitoring and reporting.
4. Some SLPs are participating in an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) training series.
5. M/S teachers have completed a training series on the "Unique" curriculum.
6. Steps will next be taken with school site Special Education staff regarding professional development needed to meet their school's needs as written in the SEP Plan (see below).
7. Administrators participated in IEP facilitation training.

Parent Events:

Mark your calendar for the upcoming parent meetings!

1) ASPED Families Talk (see attached flyer)

Special Education Town Hall w/ AUSD Leadership

Monday, January 11, 2021

6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://tinyurl.com/ASPED-01112021>

AUSD Representatives in Attendance: Pasquale Scuderi, Superintendent; Kirsten Zaso, Chief Student Support Officer; Sara Stone, Chief Academic Officer; Pam Kazee, Director, Special Education

2) Parent Resource Network

Topic: IEP Questions and Answers

Date: Thursday, January 21

Time: 6:00 to 6:45 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://alamedaunified.zoom.us/j/84480147468?pwd=SXpUZnhIRXg1U2JuOFJuZlZlcGd5Zz09>

Additional Instruction:

1. Sessions are underway and offered by the district for M/M, SDC and CEC learners with IEPs in the areas of Reading and Mathematics to support learning recovery.
2. The students attend for 30 minute virtual sessions in small groups (3 to 4 students) with follow-up resources provided to access if families wish to do so.
3. **Tutor Corps** is the agency contracted with for instructors. To date, we have been impressed with the instruction being delivered.
4. If you missed the opportunity to register your child, you may do so by filling in the following form, sending an e-mail to cstanley@alamedaunified.org, or calling Christina Nieves at the district office (510-337-7000).
5. We will place your student on our list and add when the first available slot opens. Some slots may become available after the holidays. Or, if we have enough interest, we would consider adding groups.

Additional Instruction Interest Form

CCEIS: A great deal of “Coordinated Early Intervening Services” work is underway through parent and staff collaboration. These services provide supports to students who struggle. Currently, Black/African American students are over-identified for Other Health Impaired (behavioral and social/emotional reasons) and Intellectually Disabled. Through intervention, students can receive more immediate support and as a result, may not need special education services. If the need becomes apparent for special education, beneficial data collected from interventions then informs the IEP.

Special Education Plan (SEP): The SEP plan has multiple required elements to focus on. Drafts were recently submitted to the California Department of Education (CDE) and will be posted on the Special Education Department webpage when approved. Focus areas include:

1. Improvement of graduation rates;
2. Pre-school services;
3. Participation in standardized tests;
4. Development of a SELPA program that results in fewer NPS placements;
5. A plan to decrease discipline and suspension, especially for students of color;
6. IEP learner achievement gap closure for ELA and Math.

District staff will share data with school-based staff in January to begin to develop site specific SEP plans. Most districts across the state engage in SEP in order to continuously work on improvement. This is an effort that will be beneficial for AUSD students with disabilities. Work on the *AUSD Special Education Strategic Plan* will also resume in order to support SEP implementation. Meeting dates will be announced after the holidays.

Be safe and take good care during the holiday season!

Respectfully,



Pam Kaze
AUSD Director of Special Education
Email: pkaze@alamedaunified.org

CC:
Pasquale Scuderi, Superintendent
Kirsten Zazo, Chief Student Support Officer
Sara Stone, Chief Academic Officer

