



LAGO VISTA ISD SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM EVALUATION

Program Review and Recommendations

Recommendations are based upon observations, parent and staff written and oral input, and other documents provided. Final decisions must be made by the Lago Vista Board of Directors in collaboration with the administrative staff of the school district.

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Lago Vista ISD educates an estimated 114 students with disabilities. For a small district, they have quality programs, quality educators, and administrators working to fulfill IDEA requirements. This report will note the positive as well as the concerns in the area of special education. Even the best school districts and educators have room for improvement. LVISD, although doing many things well, is no exception. The general education classroom is the default position for all students with special education being a support to general education, not a replacement. The amount of special education direct and indirect instruction/support will be based upon the unique individual needs of each student. Recommendations to assist in moving LVISD from good to great are outlined at the end of this report.

Parent Input:

- ✓ Positive Feedback:
 - Speech Therapy and therapist are appreciated
 - Life Skills teachers are valued and demonstrate effective communication
 - Most parents have seen academic and non-academic benefits for their children from the efforts of all personnel
 - Appreciate the Board's willingness to conduct this evaluation
 - Caring teachers and staff

- ✓ Misperceptions:
 - Maximize potential vs. ISD floor of responsibility
 - Special Education is based on individual needs and is not a 'menu' of services to pick from
 - Difference between 'handicapping condition' vs. 'diagnosis'
 - The purpose of related services such as OT, Speech, etc.
 - Defining Inclusion

- ✓ Concerns:
 - Want higher expectation for their child at school
 - Want to feel a partner in the ARD process
 - Want honest answers to questions

- Wants to understand their child's disability
- Improve Communication - transparent and honest
- Evaluations do not always reflect their child's abilities
- Transition Services

Staff Input:

- Positive Feedback:
 - Caring teachers and staff
 - Frequent contact with parents - positive rapport
- Misperceptions:
 - Defining Inclusion
 - Understanding Response to Intervention (RtI) and Early Intervening Services
 - Paperwork reduction is possible with Special Education and IDEA
 - The process for placement in Special Education can be simplified
 - PPCD is a program
- Concerns:
 - Gen. Ed. Teachers must take ownership for the IEP'S and instruction. It is not the responsibility of the aide in the classroom.
 - Reinstate an ED/BD Program
 - Educate all teachers and develop an appreciation for accountability for ALL students.
 - Need additional training or support for Autism
 - Enhance vocational training options

General Observations of Consultant:

- ❖ Climate on the campuses is very positive - staff and children are seen as happy and appear to enjoy being at school
- ❖ Teachers appear to collaborate with each other often on an informal basis

- ❖ Most parents are pleased with the level of services even if they have voiced a desire for more information to enhance understanding
- ❖ Concerns voiced by parents appear to be primarily due to misinterpretation of IDEA requirements, eligibility, placement, or understanding who is responsible to answer their questions.
- ❖ The assessment staff, although they write a good report, it is not done in a collaborative team manner with the results integrated into one report.
- ❖ I was unable to discern who was responsible for RtI, Child Study Teams, Dyslexia, etc.
- ❖ Special Education ARD paperwork is appropriate. Quality is based on individual case manager understanding of the requirements.
- ❖ Functional Behavior Assessments do not identify the patterns of a maladaptive behavior or why the behavior is sustained, thereby leading to appropriate behavior improvement plans.
- ❖ Transition documents leading to a coherent course sequence based on student identified interests can be improved.
- ❖ Teachers appear to be willing to learn new skills
- ❖ Release time is not given to special education staff to meet with Director to keep informed of updates and other legal information
- ❖ Director does not have clerical assistance
- ❖ Assistive Technology and other special request evaluations appear to take a long period of time to complete

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Schedule one day every August for the special education professional staff to come together for team building, legal updates, and setting the year's expectations for special education. Currently there does not appear to be a system for information communication that is effective.
2. Director should meet with support staff and teacher representatives monthly to keep everyone informed of IDEA requirements.
3. Teachers provided the release time to attend training in areas identified by Director and other administrative staff. Teachers should be required to share what they learn at the training with the other special education teachers on a monthly basis.
4. Develop and post a clear organizational chart from the Board down to teachers and aides for all to know who to communicate with when there are questions about a specific program.
5. Further develop PPCD LRE initiatives which would begin with all staff understanding that PPCD is a service and not a program. PPCD and PK teachers should plan together using the same curriculum.

6. Consider a part-time Parent Liaison position who would become part of the Parent Network through the ESC 13. This person would assist parents in navigating the complexities of IDEA.
7. Support and training provided to the evaluation personnel in order to understand how to write one full and individual evaluation report. Training should include how to discuss the evaluation with parents.
8. Parent Training/Information sharing meetings should be conducted monthly with childcare provided. Parents need to understand the basic premise of IDEA and an attempt to dispel the misperceptions. Parents and educators would benefit from learning together and collaboratively. A support system for parents with children on the Autism Spectrum could also meet.
9. Set up a Special Education link on the LVISD website. This link can help inform parents regarding IDEA, programs in the district, as well as outside links that may be helpful.
10. Train staff on using Person Centered Planning to assist the 'hard to teach' students.
11. Develop a "Focus" program for children with behavior disorders. If done well, it would benefit the whole campus and be part of the Rtl process. Functional Behavioral Analysis training will assist in seeing patterns and developing behavior plans.
12. Train staff how to lead collaborative ARD meetings using open-ended questions so that parents feel their input is considered.