



## Federal Programs: Special Education

April 2019

### Executive Summary

The Special Education department at Muskogee Public Schools (MPS) is dedicated to the delivery of effective special education programs and services to students' with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. Through individualized instruction we focus on each students unique needs, while creating a learning experience that will equip them for future success. Our mission is to provide a solid educational foundation, that is engaging, offers a variety learning opportunities, and is targeted to student needs.

To ensure a quality instructional environment, we strive to provide:

- support for all sites, students, staff, and parents
- professional development to staff
- timely and accurate data to inform instruction.

The Special Education Department is comprised of a district level Executive Director, a Special Education Coordinator, a Compliance and Parent Coordinator and a District Psychometrist. Descriptions of each role and their primary responsibilities are listed below:

- Executive Director: Responsible for special services overall program implementation, evaluation and reporting
- Special Education Coordinator: Works with sites to coordinate all special education programming, student placement, and instruction.
- Compliance and Parent Outreach Coordinator: Oversees and coordinates district Individual Education Plan compliance, testing/assessments and parent contacts.

- *District Psychometrist:* Administers and score comprehensive evaluation assessment to determine student eligibility for special services.

### What is Special Education?

Special education is specially designed instruction that addresses the unique needs of a student eligible to receive special education services. It is provided at no cost to parents and includes the related services a student needs to access her/his educational program. A student may qualify for services in one of the areas as identified by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The following listings are areas of qualification.

- Autism
- Communication Disorders
- Deafness
- Deaf-Blindness
- Emotional/Behavioral Disability
- Other Health Impairment
- Hearing Impairment
- Intellectual Disability
- Multiple Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Visual Impairment

## Supports for Implementation

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### Providing systematic tools of organization to sites

Ensuring that high level supports are provided to students and staff is of the utmost importance to the special education department. Promoting collaborative practices across general education, special education, related service providers, district level staff and parents allows us to reach the least restrictive potential for students. We are continuously researching ways to supply effective strategies of support to all.

Student success depends on all facets of the special education department running at peak capacity. The building of relationships and a collaborate culture are key components to our student's success. It is the responsibility of the district to set goals, keep information flowing among all stakeholders, and maintain local, state, and federal mandates for the program.

Special Education at both the district and site level must wear numerous hats throughout the day to reach every student. Everything from teaching, lesson planning, curriculum alignment, college and career-readiness, progress monitoring, social-emotional learning, parent involvement to paperwork are part of our day. While accomplishing these tasks, we are also charged with meeting the rules set forth by the Individual with Education Act (IDEA) as well. Our staff works tirelessly to establish systems that are easy to follow and allow for a teamwork approach.

## Professional Development for Implementation

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### Providing High Quality Training

Special Education teachers and staff rely on the district to provide effective, relevant, high-quality professional development in all areas of need. The skills needed to assist our students are fluid and require constant attention and trainings. Our approach is to provide numerous options to our staff in order to meet the needs of everyone.

We strive to provide our staff with the right tools and knowledge to optimize student success. Many times it is difficult to keep up with the changes in mandates, differentiated instruction, behavior techniques, and required paperwork. To meet all of these important standards we have adopted a multidisciplinary approach to in-service trainings. In the face of the changing landscape of special education needs, we recognize that it is important to provide flexible teaching and coaching that creates the least amount of stress.

## Data

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### Use of data to inform instruction and student placement

Data collection methods are used in special education to identify students, inform instruction, and meet local, state and federal mandates. The use of a variety of measures fosters a data-driven culture and allows for a clear picture of overall programming. Analyzing all angles of programming exposes deficiencies needed to make changes and sustain success.

Formal academic and cognitive assessments, behavior inventories, and classroom interventions are all points of data used to determine program eligibility. These tools are used to provide an overall picture of a student's current strengths and weaknesses. Once a child is placed and begins receiving services, methods of data collection move to the classroom assessments given on a daily, weekly and annual basis.

The data we gather is used to develop and implement appropriate goals and objectives for student learning through the Individual Education Plan (IEP) process. Data gathered in the classroom looks different than that of formal assessments for each student and the measurable goals set forth for them. Using state assessments, progress monitoring and common formative assessments are all part of the daily monitoring of a student's academic growth.

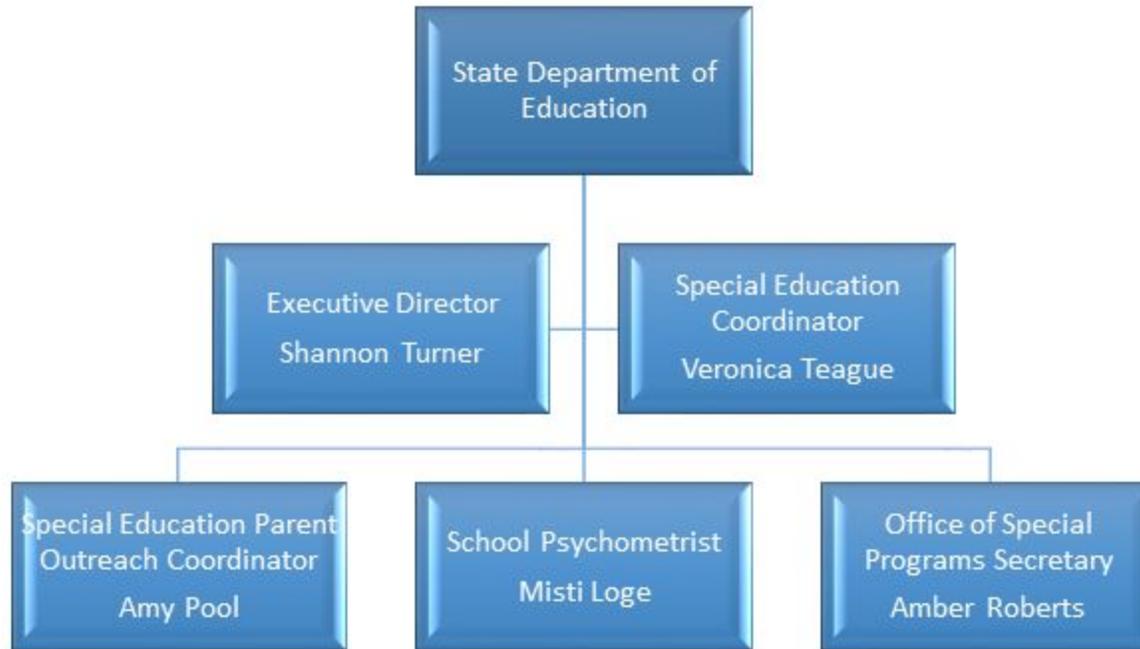
The Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) is tasked with the general supervision and monitoring of the implementation of IDEA. Each year districts participate in an annual compliance and performance review. Findings for the 2018 School Year identified a differentiated monitoring result (DMR), based on assessment of risk factors and overall rating of a Tier 2 (out of 4). We received a rating of a Tier 2: (76.47%) Needs Assistance and Risk Category 1, very low risk. The determination requires us to participate in activities, such as professional development, self-assessment, and targeted assistance that will focus on areas of need identified in the monitoring.

Personnel

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Staff and Structure

**Organizational Chart  
Muskogee Public Schools  
Special Services Department  
2018-19SY**



## Effectiveness Indicators

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### Providing Supports for All...

Effectiveness of support for special services is prescriptive and research-based on

- Special Education staffing meetings are held weekly to discuss student referrals. Submission of students for the testing process requires state and federal mandated requirements. Giving staff an uninterrupted time frame to collaborate and make adjustment is vital to the referral process.
- The addition of a Special Education Compliance Officer has allowed us to monitor IEP paperwork, timelines, data reports and foster communication with parents
- EdPlan is the IEP program provided by the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE).
- LaserFiche has allowed us to digitally archive all special education paperwork
- The school psychometrist has been able to take over the bulk of our formal and cognitive student assessments
- Google Classroom and TeamDrive allows us to effectively push out important forms, manuals and professional development
- Monthly Professional Learning Community(PLC) meetings provide a collaborative working time for special education teachers and district staff.
- The Special Olympics coach works with students daily to prepare them for year round participation in local, area and state games.
- ParaProfessionals assist teachers with providing high-quality instruction and behavior management
- Camp Bennett is an educational and recreational summer day camp for special needs students and adults

## Effectiveness Indicators

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### Providing High Quality Professional development

Professional development is designed to enhance the instructional process for our educators. We strive to provide a multitude of training opportunities to our staff.

In-district

Out-of-district

Google Classroom

Google Team Drive

Webinars

Online Courses

Modules (OSDE)

Consultants

Oklahoma State Department of Education

### Types of Professional Development

Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI)

Trauma-Informed Instruction

Edplan - EasyIEP

Star 360 - Progress monitoring

Inclusion

Autism

Behavior Intervention Plans

Functional Behavior Assessments

State Assessments (OSTP/DLM)

Speech-Language Pathologist Assistant Content Advisory Board

Goals and Progress Monitoring

ABLE Tech Training

Language Therapy

ALICE training

Medications

Diabetes

Data - District Level

Data Informed Instruction

Dyslexia

Child Count

Law/Legislation

Accommodations/Modifications

CPR

Effective Behavior Management

Ethics

Transformed Educators

Decoding and the struggling reader  
Talented ED PreK-5th math, reading and science  
Special Olympics Coaches Training

OAAP  
Writing effective IEPs

## Effectiveness Indicators

### Use of Data to Identify Students and Inform Instruction

Data informs all aspects of the special education processes. This collection of information is an integral part of guiding our programming.

- EdPlan - EasyIEP is a web-based Special Education Case Management program. This suite of tools and services promotes student success through Individual Education Plans(IEPs), academics, and behavior.
- Childcount is an unduplicated count of all special education students ages 3-21, and the services they receive and teacher caseloads
- Star 360 is a progress monitoring tool to gauge student academic growth to inform instruction.
- Oklahoma School Testing Program (OSTP) is the state mandated assessment program.
- Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) is an alternative assessment system that is used to measure academic content knowledge for special education students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- Comprehensive evaluation data is used in determining placement and guide teachers in developing initial IEP goals
- Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) measures a students ability to read words, comprehension and math computation.

A Special Education Compliance Plan is developed to address deficiencies found in identified federally mandated indicators.

- Indicator 1-2: Graduation and Dropout Rate
- Indicator 10: Disproportionality of Racial/Ethnic Representation
- Indicator 11: Child Find, timely initial evaluation
- Indicator 13: Secondary Transition Requirement Documentation

Improvement Activities for Indicators:

- Provide in-depth training to improve targeted interventions, student accomodations, and compliance procedures

- Review eligibility determination process and determine where improvements can be made
- Institute compliance procedures

## Cost of Program

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### Federal Grants:

- 621 - Flowthrough - \$1,428,831.44 - Federal supplemental funds to ensure that all children with disabilities age 3-21 receive funds. Funds are used to support staff salaries, consultants, instructional supplies, materials and equipment.
- 625 - Flowthrough Private - \$3,128.04 - Students attending private schools, who would otherwise be enrolled in a public school, are entitled to a proportionate amount of IDEA federal funds to provide equitable services.
- 615 - Professional Development - Additional federal funds to provide professional development activities and materials to staff.
- 641 - Preschool Flowthrough - \$57,891.00 - Federal funds to ensure preschool-aged children 3-5 years of age with disabilities receive special education and related services.

Maintenance of Effort(MOE) requires local educational agencies (LEAs) to maintain the level of state and local funds they spend to support federal programs from one fiscal year to the next. In the listing below we have provided a list of how our district meets this mandate.

- Medical Services - Occupational Therapy/Physical Therapy - Access 2 Health Care Solutions
- Service Providers - Evaluations/Assessment - School Based Services/Speech Pathologists - Access 2 Health Care Solutions
- Homebound Services
- Transportation - Daily fuel costs/Salaries for bus drivers
- Staff Salaries - Special Education Teachers/Paraprofessionals/District Staff (Support and Certified)

## Vision for the Future

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### Supports for Programming

Muskogee Public Schools is in a time of change with reconfiguration of our school sites and boundaries. These changes have catapulted our Special Education Department into reviewing, researching, and discovering new and best practices for serving our students.

**Inclusion** is the idea that many students with disabilities and general education students can be effectively taught within the general education classroom when appropriate resources are provided. We would like to move our district forward toward this model of instruction for our special needs students. This approach contrasts with what we have done in the past, when special education often meant segregating students with disabilities and providing them with instruction in isolation from their general education peers. Students learning alongside their peers will gain valuable social skills, experience the same instructional opportunities, and be included in the wider school community.

This process takes research and time to implement. Meeting the requirements set forth through the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), providing related services, and making accommodations are all areas that will need to be taken into consideration before implementation. Our commitment to providing the best educational experience to all of our special needs students has brought us to the conclusion that the moment is right for this transformation.

Moving to a **Response to Intervention (RtI)** model for identifying students with learning disabilities in place of the current discrepancy model used. The discrepancy model identifies students by identifying a 'severe discrepancy' between ability and achievement, while RtI only requires documentation that the student has been unable to respond to appropriate interventions which have been provided within the classroom. This model has proven to lower significantly special education numbers in districts by intervening immediately for students in the classroom.

This is a goal for our department and district as a whole that will take time and intense professional development before implementation can occur. Beginning the process of understanding and professional development during the 2019-20 school year would be an ideal start. The one thing we do not want to do is rush into new approaches of identifying students for special education without the appropriate trainings and research.

## Vision for the Future

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### Professional Training Bank

The MPS Special Education Department vision is to provide high-quality, meaningful and timely professional development for our teachers and staff. The interconnected points of training outlined below summarize our vision focus.

- Allowing opportunities to attend meaningful professional development - While moving our district forward in how we serve special need students, we will need to provide high-quality preservice and continuing professional development experiences that prepare all teachers to work effectively with students' disabilities.
- Webinars/Google Team Drive/Classroom - We currently utilize these tools in a limited manner. We are seeking to expand our use in order to foster a more collaborative resource for staff. Using these platforms to increase and organize professional development will allow us to build capacity among our teachers
- In-district training - Supporting our teachers and staff on site will play a pivotal role in the implementation of an inclusion program. We are committed to providing our teachers with the necessary tools and supports in the classroom for student success.

## Vision for the Future

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### Relevant, Meaningful & Timely Data

Our vision for the use of data to inform instruction is multifaceted. The use of multiple data points to differentiate student instruction is vital to the academic achievement of all students. Monitoring progress of students allows us to find the instructional gaps in student learning and re-teach these areas quickly. Teachers require concrete data to develop targeted interventions to meet students' needs.

Our vision includes supporting principals and teachers in putting student achievement data to the best possible use as follows:

- Make data part of the ongoing cycle of instructional improvement
- Provide supports that foster a data-driven culture within the school
- Develop and maintain a federal compliance