SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Oldham-Ramona School District
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2006

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Date of Report: December 11, 2006

This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by Special Education Programs. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

Promising Practice The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.

Meets Requirements The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.

Needs Assistance The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement and is out of compliance.

Needs Intervention The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement and is out of compliance.

Not applicable In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

Principle 1 – General Supervision

General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data Sources Used:
Student progress data
Surveys
Private school information
Comprehensive plan
Data Tables
Private school information

Promising Practice

The steering committee concluded from the parent surveys a promising practice is the district's parent advisory board, which identifies and participates in training opportunities.

Meets Requirements

Upon review of the state tables, preschool screening activities, newspaper accounts, and the school newsletter, the steering committee concluded the school district has established and effectively implemented an ongoing child find system to locate, identify, and evaluate children with disabilities, ages birth through 21 years, who may need special education. In addition, the committee concluded the district's pre-referral and referral system ensures students are identified without unnecessary delay.

In accordance with the district's comprehensive plan, the committee determined the district will insure a student placed in a private school or facility receives special education services and special education and related services.

Based on a review of district procedures, the steering committee concluded the district reviews and analyzes district-level data to determine progress toward meeting the state performance goals and indicators.

The steering committee determined from review of Table C that the district reviews and analyzes discipline data and revises polices/procedures if significant discrepancies are present between long-term suspension and expulsion rates of children with and without disabilities. The committee noted no children receiving special education services have been suspended or expelled since 2000.

Based on State and district information, the steering committee found the district employs personnel who are fully licensed or certified to work with children who have disabilities. In addition, they determined the district personnel have opportunities to attend training activities.

Not applicable

No private schools are located within the district.

Validation Results

Promising Practice
The team validated the committee's promising practice conclusion of the district having a parent advisory board to identify and participate in training opportunities.

Meets Requirements
Through interviews, state data tables, and 11 file reviews, the monitoring team validated the steering committee's conclusions that the district meets the general supervision requirements for reporting progress toward state performance goals and indicators, long-term suspension and expulsion, and employing licensed and certified staff to provide services to children with disabilities.

Based on interviews and file reviews, the team agreed with the steering committee's conclusion the district has an effective pre-referral and referral system.

Needs Intervention
Issue requiring immediate attention:
ARSD 24:05:22:03 Certified Child
A certified child is a child in need of special education or special education and related services who has received a multidisciplinary evaluation and has an individual education program formulated and approved by a local placement committee. Documentation supporting a child's disabling condition as defined by Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act must be maintained by the district for verification of its annual child count. This definition applies to all eligible children ages 3 to 21, inclusive, and only to those children under the age of 3 who are in need of prolonged assistance.

Through review of Student File 4 and interviews, the team determined the parents had concerns pertaining to their child's behavior of not paying attention, difficulty following along with the instruction, and difficulty focusing on tasks. The multidisciplinary evaluation did not include behavior assessments to determine whether the behaviors were impeding the child's learning. The child must be reevaluated with the inclusion of behavior and attention skill assessments, and the IEP team must meet, review the findings, and the eligibility for this child.

Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data Sources Used:
State Tables
Comprehensive Plan
Parent surveys
Teacher file reviews

Meets Requirements
Through review of Table I, the district's comprehensive plan, parent surveys, and file reviews, the steering committee concluded the district provides a FAPE to all eligible children with disabilities.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements
The monitoring team validated through interviews and file reviews the steering committee's conclusion that the district meets the eligibility requirements for the provision of a free appropriate public education to children with disabilities.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input, conducts a comprehensive evaluation. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data Sources Used:

State Tables
Teacher file reviews
Surveys
Comprehensive plan

Meets Requirements
Based on the file reviews and notices, the steering committee concluded the district provides appropriate written notice and obtains informed consent before assessments are administered. The district ensures reevaluations are conducted in accordance with all procedural requirements for appropriate evaluation and continued eligibility. In addition, the committee determined the district ensures proper identification of students with disabilities through the evaluation process.

Needs Assistance
Through file reviews, the steering committee concluded the district was out of compliance, because a test requested in the prior notice was not administered, one file did not have a functional assessment completed, a child's testing was not completed within the 25 school-day time period, and a test was not given to support a child's suspected disability.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements
The monitoring team did not validate the steering committee's finding that one student file did not have parent input documentation for evaluation. The 11 files reviewed by the monitoring team had documentation of parent input into the evaluation.

Needs Assistance

ARSD 24:05:30:04 Prior notice and parent consent
Informed parent consent must be obtained before conducting a first-time evaluation, reevaluation, and before initial placement of a child in a program providing special education or special education and related services.

The monitoring team did not validate the steering committee's findings that the district obtains informed consent when a child is evaluated. Through file reviews, the team found in Student File 4 indicated consent was received on 4-19-06; however, the child had a fine motor evaluation conducted on 4-11-06.

Through file reviews, the team could not validate whether revaluations were conducted before consent was received or completed within the 25 school-day timeline because: Student Files 1 and 2 had no dates to show when behavioral testing was done; no date was given when speech/language assessments had been conducted in Student Files 3 and 5; Student File 8 did

not have dates showing when attention, behavioral/emotional, behavioral/social, or academic functional assessments were given; and, Student File 9 did not indicate a date for the administration of a fine motor assessment.

The team did not validate the steering committee's decision the district ensures proper identification of students with disabilities through the evaluation process. This was addressed in the general supervision section.

ARSD 24:05:25:04 Evaluation procedures

A variety of assessment tools and strategies are used to gather relevant functional and developmental information about a child, including information provided by the parents that may assist in determining whether the child is a child with a disability

The steering committee's finding that a functional assessment was not completed was validated by the monitoring team; however, the team found more than one student file lacked functional assessment information. No academic, fine motor, or gross motor functional assessment information was found in Student File 4; Student File 5 did not have functional academic and gross motor assessment information; and, no fine or gross motor functional assessments were documented in Student File 9.

The steering committee's out of compliance finding that a test was not given to support a child's suspected disability was validated by the monitoring team. A review of Student File 6 did not have documentation showing an adaptive behavior assessment was given for a student placed in the special education category. An adaptive behavior assessment was completed after the team leaders brought this to the teacher's attention during the pre-site visit. An IEP addendum meeting was held following this evaluation, which addressed the child's eligibility for special education services.

Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data Sources Used:
Teacher file reviews
Surveys
Comprehensive plan

Parental rights document
Consent and prior notice forms

Meets Requirements
Based on parent surveys, file reviews, and a review of the Parent Rights Booklet, the steering committee determined the district insures parents are informed of their parental rights under IDIEA. In addition, parents are fully informed in their native language or another mode of communication of all information relevant to the district's request for consent. The committee also concluded the district provides parents an opportunity to inspect and review all educational records concerning the identification, evaluation, and educational placement of their child and the provision of a FAPE.

The steering committee concluded the district adheres to the policies and procedures in the comprehensive plan to appoint a surrogate parent for a child with a disability when a parent cannot be located.

Based on the district's comprehensive plan, the steering committee determined the district has policies in place that address a complaint or a request for due process.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements
The monitoring team validated through interviews and file reviews the steering committee's conclusion that the district meets the requirements of procedural safeguards.

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data Sources Used:
Comprehensive plan
Teacher file reviews
State Data Tables – complaints
Parent surveys
Student surveys

Meets Requirements
Upon review of the district's policies and procedures, file reviews, and surveys, the steering committee concluded the district ensures the written prior notice includes the required content, the IEP team is comprised of appropriate team membership, the IEP document contains all the required content, and an appropriate IEP is developed and in effect for each eligible student.

The committee also determined the district ensures transition plans for students are a coordinated set of activities reflecting student strengths and interests to prepare them for post-secondary activities.

Needs Assistance
Through file reviews, the steering committee found one student file did not have parent input documentation for evaluation.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The steering committee's conclusion that the district ensures the written prior notice and IEP document includes the required content, and the IEP team is comprised of appropriate team membership was validated by the monitoring team.

Needs Assistance
Refer to the procedural safeguards section for the team's decision regarding the steering committee's finding that one student file did not have parent input documentation for evaluation.

ARSD 24:05:27:01:05 Content of individualized education program (1a, 2a, 8 a & b, 9)

A student's IEP must contain a statement of the student's present levels academic and functional performance, including how the student's disability affects the student's progress in the general education curriculum.

The steering committee's conclusion that an appropriate IEP is developed and in effect for each eligible student was not validated by the monitoring team. In a review of 11 IEPs, the present levels of performance were not skill specific; for example, a student's academic strengths included, "quiet and well-mannered", "tries hard to play the trumpet", "good attendance". Examples of present levels of performance weaknesses were, "Math computation is difficult for …", "Low reading skills/writing skills", "…. is sometimes inconsistent with (fine motor) skills from day to day". Student

Files 3, 5, 6, and 7 did not address how the student's speech/language impairment affects his/her progress in the general curriculum.

Annual goals must be measurable and reasonable for the student to accomplish within a one-year timeframe. The monitoring team found each IEP reviewed had several annual goals based on standards. Some goals had been written as measurable, but goals not measurable were also noted; for example, "… will apply strategies to read and understand different types of texts". In addition, related services goals were consistently not measurable; for example, "… will demonstrate improvement in fine motor coordination to enhance classroom performance" and "… will use phonological cues to read unfamiliar text."

ARSD 24:05:27:13.02 Transition services

Transition services are a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability, designed within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the student with the disability to facilitate the student's movement from school to post school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities shall be based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's strengths, preferences and interests, and shall include instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

The monitoring team did not validate the committee's conclusion that the district ensures transition plans for students are a coordinated set of activities reflecting student strengths and interests to prepare them for post-secondary activities. Upon review of Student Files 2, 9, and 11, the team determined an employment interest inventory was the only transition assessment given, therefore, transition services were not specific or a coordinated set of activities to meet the needs of the students'. For example, a service was addressed, "… is able to use a variety of reading and study strategies to incorporate comprehension in the classroom setting." In addition, transition was not addressed in the students' IEP present levels of performance.

Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least

restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data Sources Used:
State Data Tables
File reviews
Student surveys
District information

Meets Requirements
Based on surveys, state tables, and district information, the steering committee concluded all children who receive special education services are in the least restrictive environment with needed supports.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements
The monitoring team validated the committee's conclusion that all children in the district receive services in the least restrictive environment.