



GRADUATION RATE

DROPOUT RATE

STATEWIDE ASSESSMENTS

SUSPENSION & EXPULSION

LEAST RESTRICTIVE
ENVIRONMENT

PRESCHOOL LEAST
RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

PRESCHOOL ASSESSMENT

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

DISPROPORTIONALITY
BY ELIGIBILITY AND
RACE/ETHNICITY

ELIGIBILITY EVALUATIONS

PART C TO PART B
TRANSITION

SECONDARY TRANSITION
GOALS AND SERVICES

POST SCHOOL OUTCOMES

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

CHILD FIND

Utilizing High Leverage Practices as
Change Ideas to Improve Outcomes
for Students with Disabilities



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Utilizing High Leverage Practices as Change Ideas to Improve Outcomes for Students with Disabilities

The purpose of the SELPA System Improvement Leads (SIL) Project is to work collaboratively within the Statewide System of Support to build the capacity of Special Education Local Plan Areas (SELPAs) and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) with a common goal to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. The work of SIL is rooted in three areas: data use and governance, continuous improvement, and high leverage and evidence based practices.

In an effort to build capacity around the implementation of High Leverage Practices (HLPs), the SIL Team has developed a guidebook titled Utilizing High Leverage Practices as Change Ideas to Improve Outcomes for Students with Disabilities. This guidebook was designed to assist LEAs in utilizing HLPs as change ideas to improve outcomes for students with disabilities, and focuses on the elements of the Special Education Plan, including State Performance Plan Indicators 1 through 14, as well as Chronic Absenteeism and Child Find. The guidebook incorporates change ideas that may be implemented at multiple levels within the LEA to improve outcomes for all students, with an emphasis on students with disabilities and those areas targeted for special education monitoring.



This resource was developed by the System Improvement Leads (SIL) project. SIL is supported by the California Department of Education and the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence and adapted from: High-Leverage Practices in Special Education (2016), CEEDAR Center and Council for Exceptional Children.



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High Leverage Practices for the Improvement of State Performance Plan Indicators

1 and 2

Graduation Rate and Drop Out Rate

- Beginning in middle school, track and monitor student academic, attendance, and behavior data and intervene when concerns arise
- In final year of middle school (ie: 8th grade), hold IEP meeting to discuss transition to high school with middle school and high school staff present. Plan student schedule and discuss program options, services and student interests
- Provide parents and guardians with regular access to view grades and coursework online
- Offer course focused on study skills that is mandatory for all 9th graders and optional for upper grade
- Offer flexible credit recovery options online and in person during and outside the regular school day with support
- Provide social skills Social Emotional Learning instruction
- Comprehensive alternative education options and pathways to earning a high school diploma including credit recovery options with special education services
- Regular collaboration between guidance counselor, special education teacher/IEP case carrier, general education teachers, and student to monitor student progress and credit acquisition
- PLC time for general education and special education teachers to collaborate and have common instructional planning time
- Develop partnerships with community colleges and technical education centers to provide access to high quality career preparation programs including dual enrollment options and Career Technical Education (CTE) courses
- Monitor students who have dropped out and communicate at least annually (letter or phone call) reminding students that they can re-enroll and are entitled to special education services through age 21

High Leverage Practices

High Leverage Practices (HLPs) are critical research based strategies that focus on improving outcomes for ALL students

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High Leverage Practices for the Improvement of State Performance Plan Indicators

3

Statewide Assessments

- All students with disabilities are included in the assessment system
- Decisions about how students with disabilities participate in assessments are the result of clearly articulated participation, accommodations, and assessment decision-making processes
- IEP Team members (including parent and student) understand the implications of assessment participation decisions, and that understanding is evident in documentation and/or monitoring reports
- Write standards based annual IEP goals that are based on grade level California Common Core State Standards
- Ensure alignment of curriculum to state standards and content covered in statewide assessments
- Provide evidence based instruction and interventions to students in ELA and Math Implementation of UDL that ensures individuals with a wide range of diverse abilities can access and use educational curriculum through the same or equivalent means regardless of their knowledge, skills and experience
- Utilization of strategies to promote student engagement (i.e. cooperative learning groups, peer-assisted learning, technology)
- Provide accommodations and supports to provide access to the general education environment with access to the general education curriculum to the maximum extent possible
- Ensure alignment of student IEP accommodations on statewide assessments
- District and school wide MTSS process to identify and provide intervention to students performing below proficient
- Ongoing collaboration and communication with students, staff, and parents to monitor and communicate academic progress
- PLC time for general education and special education teachers to collaborate and have common instructional planning time
- Teachers use grade-level standards, assessment data, learning progressions, students' prior knowledge, and IEP goals and benchmarks to make decisions about what is most crucial to emphasize in curriculum and content
- District and school site teams consist of district and site administrators, counselors, assessment coordinators, and teachers who review data and develop action plans to improve student achievement based on district benchmarks and curriculum based assessment data
- Provide high quality site-based professional development
- Teachers understand essential curriculum components, identify essential prerequisites and foundations, and assess student performance in relation to these components

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Suspension & Expulsion

- Implement a school-wide behavior system (PBIS, Boys Town, Assertive Discipline, etc.)
- Use positive behavioral interventions and supports for all students including Positive Behavior Intervention Plan
- Establish a consistent, organized and respectful learning environment
- Monitor implementation of the school-wide behavior system to ensure fidelity
- Gather and analyze school site and district discipline, suspension and expulsion rates and look for trends and patterns and identify at risk students
- Special education teachers/IEP case carriers monitor individual student data monthly and look for patterns to respond to with intervention and continue to monitor
- Site level discipline team works closely with one another to support and communicate regarding student behavior including site security staff and administrators
- Child Welfare and Attendance (CWA) team and Student Services department work collaboratively to identify a District Discipline Committee and look at alternatives to suspension
- Develop individual behavior plans or contracts to improve at risk student behavior
- Implement with fidelity and monitor closely positive behavior intervention plans for students with behavioral and discipline referrals
- Communicate with parent/guardian early and often regarding behavioral concerns and school discipline
- Regularly review and revise site and district level discipline policies and procedures (at least annually) and ensure they are aligned with most current policies such as California Education Code
- Integrate behavior support systems with academic support systems
- Provide ongoing staff development regarding school and district-wide behavior systems
- Cultural responsiveness training for staff
- Provide mentoring opportunities for students
- Teacher implementation of multiple strategies to foster student engagement
- To build and foster positive relationships, teachers should establish age appropriate and culturally responsive expectations, routines, and procedures within their classrooms that are positively stated and explicitly taught and practiced across the school year
- When establishing learning environments, teachers should build mutually respectful relationships with students and engage them in setting the classroom climate (e.g., rules and routines); be respectful; and value ethnic, cultural, contextual, and linguistic diversity to foster student engagement across learning environment
- When students demonstrate mastery and follow established rules and routines, teachers should provide age-appropriate specific performance feedback in meaningful and caring ways
- Teachers should explicitly teach appropriate interpersonal skills, including communication, and self-management, aligning lessons with classroom and schoolwide expectations for student behavior

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5

Least Restrictive Environment

- Define special education as a service, not a placement
- Develop simple, easy to read LRE data reports
- Develop and follow LRE data monitoring process and schedule
- Collaboration and coteaching between general and special education teachers to ensure student success in the least restrictive environment
- Collaboration between school staff and families to support student learning
- Share and analyze inclusive practice data with staff, students, and families
- Maintain district policies and procedures that reflect LRE requirements
- During IEP meetings examine harmful effects of removing child from general education
- Examine and update service delivery approaches and models
- Provide training for staff on accurately calculating and documenting special education service minutes and time spent in and out of general education setting
- Maximize training on inclusive targets and expectations
- Focus on fostering inclusive district culture and beliefs of administrators, general education and special education staff and specialists
- Provide training and resources (ie: UDL) for general education teachers to help meet the instructional needs of all students
- Collaboratively develop short and long term targets for each school site to increase inclusion of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment
- District wide commitment to continuous improvement in the area of least restrictive environment
- Collaboration with general education teachers, paraprofessionals, and support staff is necessary to support students' learning toward measurable outcomes and to facilitate students' social and emotional well-being across all school environments and instructional settings (e.g., co-taught)
- Collaboration with individuals or teams requires the use of effective collaboration behaviors (e.g., sharing ideas, active listening, questioning, planning, problem solving, negotiating) to develop and adjust instructional or behavioral plans based on student data, and the coordination of expectations, responsibilities, and resources to maximize student learning
- Teachers prioritize what is most important for students to learn by providing meaningful access to and success in the general education and other contextually relevant curricula
- Teachers assess individual student needs and adapt curriculum materials and tasks so that students can meet instructional goals

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6

Preschool Least Restrictive Environment

- Define special education as a service and support, not a placement
- Commitment to continuous improvement with current preschool practices
- Create partnerships and criteria to collaborate with early childhood educators (Head Start, State Preschool)
- Provide training for staff on accurately calculating and documenting special education service minutes and time spent in and out of general education setting
- Establish and support co-teaching and provide staff development to general and special educators combined at preschool
- Collaboration with individuals or teams requires the use of effective collaboration behaviors (e.g., sharing ideas, active listening, questioning, planning, problem solving, negotiating) to develop and adjust instructional or behavioral plans based on student data, and the coordination of expectations, responsibilities, and resources to maximize student learning
- Ensure that all adults involved with supporting the child have access to high-quality professional development, effective ongoing follow-up assistance, and support for collaborative teaming
- Empower staff with knowledge and shared ownership in the decision-making process
- Provide parent training aimed at all parents
- Establish family-professional partnerships
- Develop simple, easy to read LRE data reports
- Develop and follow LRE data monitoring process and schedule
- Share and analyze inclusive practice data with staff, students, and families
- Teachers assess individual student needs and adapt curriculum materials and tasks so that students can meet instructional goals
- Collaboration with general education teachers, paraprofessionals, and support staff is necessary to support students' learning toward measurable outcomes and to facilitate students' social and emotional well-being across all school environments and instructional settings (e.g., co-taught)
- Collaboration and coteaching between general and special education teachers to ensure student success in the least restrictive environment
- Maintain district policies and procedures that reflect LRE requirements
- Examine and update service delivery approaches and models
- Maximize training on inclusive targets and expectations
- Provide training and resources (ie: UDL) for general education teachers to help meet the instructional needs of all students
- Teachers prioritize what is most important for students to learn by providing meaningful access to and success in the general education and other contextually relevant curricula
- Collaboration with individuals or teams requires the use of effective collaboration behaviors (e.g. sharing ideas, active listening, questioning, planning, problem solving, negotiating) to develop and adjust instructional or behavioral plans based on student data, and the coordination of expectations, responsibilities, and resources to maximize student learning
- During IEP meetings examine harmful effects of removing child from general education
- Provide social emotional learning that supports preschool children to understand and manage their emotions, feel and show empathy for others, establish healthy relationships, set positive goals, and make responsible decisions
- Ensure your daily routine involves combinations of small and large group activities to provide varied types of social interactions
- Implement activities that encourage cooperative play to build friendship skills, such as cooperative use toys, dramatic play materials, and turn taking games

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Preschool Assessment

- Ensure effective policies, procedures, and programs relating to Child Find and referrals for special education are in place
- Train teachers and staff on the distinct process, purposes and timelines of screening, evaluations and assessments
- Regular collaboration and communication between supportive agencies
- Access to an effective team of teachers including both general and special education, working together as equal partners in interactive relationships, with both involved in all aspects of planning, teaching, and assessment
- Train teachers and staff in administering and documenting Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) assessment with fidelity
- Progress monitor individual student goals and objectives
- Use multiple sources of information to develop a comprehensive understanding of each student's strengths and needs
- Encourage educators to practice in a way that is aware of the cognitive progress of this age group by utilizing instructional strategies that promote higher-level thinking and creativity.
- Provide parent training focused on early childhood development
- Use assessment materials and strategies that are appropriate for the child's age and level of development and accommodate the child's sensory, physical, communication, cultural, linguistic, social, and emotional characteristics
- Report assessment results so that they are understandable and useful to families.
- Obtain information about the child's skills in daily activities, routines, and environments such as home, center, and community
- Build trusting and respectful partnerships with the family through interactions that are sensitive and responsive to cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity
- Provide the family with up-to-date, comprehensive and unbiased information in a way that the family can understand and use to make informed choices and decisions
- Staff are responsive to the family's concerns, priorities, and changing life circumstances

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Parent Involvement

- Develop and implement a cyclical and systematic process for measuring family engagement
- Work with families to self-advocate and support their student's learning
- Teachers collaborate with families about individual student's needs, goals, programs, and progress over time and ensure families are informed about their rights as well as about special education processes
- Teachers should respectfully and effectively communicate considering the background, socioeconomic status, language, culture, and priorities of the family
- School staff should work collaboratively with the parent to schedule the IEP meeting at a mutually agreed upon time and date
- Encourage parental participation at the meeting by using open ended questions to facilitate input and conversation in the IEP development and decision making process
- Provide training for parents in regards to general IEP information and IEP team membership
- Provide flexible options for participation in IEP meetings such as video conferencing, telephone, etc.
- Communicate assessment information with families to collaboratively design educational plans
- When holding IEP meetings develop a meeting agenda, allocate time to meet the goals of the agenda, and lead in ways that encourage consensus building through positive verbal and nonverbal communication, encouraging the sharing of multiple perspectives, demonstrating active listening, and soliciting feedback

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9 and 10

Disproportionality by Eligibility and Race/ethnicity

- Monitor consistency in CALPADS data
- School staff engage in collaborative communication and systematic problem-solving
- Provide Anti-Bias and culturally responsive training for teachers, administrators, and itinerants
- Systematic district and site wide MTSS process to offer tiered levels of support and interventions to support academic and behavioral needs of all students
- Implement research-based universal screening procedures
- Look for patterns in referrals and identification
- Create written procedures that provide structured guidance for school staff regarding the special education referral process
- Continuously and systematically review data with assessors (ie: Psych/Speech/OT) during PLC meetings and create and use data systems for documenting assessment and intervention outcomes
- Implement and monitor closely positive behavior intervention plans for students with behavioral and discipline referrals
- To build and foster positive relationships, teachers should establish age appropriate and culturally responsive expectations, routines, and procedures within their classrooms that are positively stated and explicitly taught and practiced across the school year
- When establishing learning environments, teachers should build mutually respectful relationships with students and engage them in setting the classroom climate (e.g., rules and routines); be respectful; and value ethnic, cultural, contextual, and linguistic diversity to foster student engagement across learning environments
- Use culturally responsive teaching strategies to build on student strengths, experiences and preferences
- Use strategies to promote active student engagement by applying learning to culture, background knowledge, and student strengths
- Adapt curriculum tasks and materials for specific goals that are relevant and create opportunities for learning around real world experiences and/or issues

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Eligibility Evaluations

- Review internal eligibility evaluation procedures to ensure efficiency and accuracy
- Provide professional development on timelines and expectations for compliance of timeline expectations for assessments
- Establish a process for documenting all initial assessments at time of referral
- Clearly defined roles for IEP data management, including well-articulated responsibilities for IEP timeline compliance
- Develop site based annual assessment calendars accessible by all stakeholders
- Allow for regular review of data to address challenges, timeline compliance and scheduling needs
- Encourage a minimum of one meeting reminder to be sent to all potential participants of Initial IEP meetings
- District special education and site level staff assigned to monitor timeline for completing initial assessments for special education
- Districtwide procedure for scheduling of initial IEP assessments and evaluations

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12

Part C to Part B Transition

- Use a collaborative approach to inter-agency planning
- Make connections between curricula and child expectations across programs/environments
- Consider the development of an inter-agency committee that will review all transition issues and effective practices
- Referral, enrollment, and program eligibility processes and timelines clearly specified
- Maintain collaborative partnerships and a working relationship with early intervention service providers
- Emphasize transition as a process and not a single event
- Collaborate with families and treat families as active, informed decision makers
- Maximize efforts to ensure all stakeholders are aware of the programmatic resources available to children and families
- Provide professional development around the components of an IFSP and IEP including the similarities and differences, intent, and content of both plans

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13

Secondary Transition Goals & Services

- Use district adopted post secondary assessment and career exploration and development curriculum
- Regularly collect data from transition plan monitoring and planning purposes
- Collaboration between school personnel and community agencies using effective collaboration behaviors (ie: sharing ideas, active listening, questioning, planning, problem solving, and negotiating) to develop and adjust transition goals and services based on student data, and the coordination of expectations, responsibilities, and resources to maximize student learning
- Assign district level special education staff to monitor for indicator 13 compliance errors (i.e. missing transition plans, goals, services, or transition checklist errors)
- Provide routine training for special education teachers regarding the completion of the Individual transition
- Plan including: Appropriate goals, services, course of study, transition checklist, and post secondary transition assessment

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Post School Outcomes

- Use multiple methods of contact to reach student to complete the Post Secondary Survey (ie: Email, Digital Questionnaire, Phone Call, Text, Social Media)
- Discuss the Post Secondary Survey and its importance with students at their Exit IEP Meeting and include collection of contact information and preferred method of contact in Summary of Performance Document
- Have students complete an exit survey to collect contact information including preferred mode of contact: Multiple phone numbers, email addresses, and social media
- Mail and email a “traditional business letter” explaining the purpose of the Post Secondary Survey, why it is important, and how the information will be used
- Emphasize to special education teachers and IEP case managers the importance of collecting student contact information prior to student exiting from school
- Send a text prior to calling and/or leave a message with a call back number to distinguish from telemarketers when making contact to complete the Post Secondary Survey
- Provide Community Based Instruction and job training that is embedded in district high school and adult transition programs
- Develop partnerships with community colleges and technical education centers to provide access to high quality career preparation programs including dual enrollment options and Career Technical Education (CTE) courses
- Develop partnerships with local community college Disabled Student Programs and Services to connect students with services, programs and supports that are available for students with disabilities in college
- Partner with Department of Rehabilitation and local agencies including regional center to offer transition and employment services and planning including Transition Partnership Program (TPP)
- Provide WorkAbility I program
- Use supported career exploration instruction
- Offer paid and unpaid work experience on and off campus
- Have career speakers present to classes to share information about various career fields
- Use transition assessment including college, career and vocational surveys and inventories to gather information about students’ skills and interests for post secondary planning purposes
- Provide students with disabilities access to general education and higher level (ie: AP and Honors) coursework to the maximum extent possible through the use of inclusive practices
- Foster and teach self-advocacy and self-determination skills
- Establish and maintain high expectations for all areas of post secondary outcomes (education, work, career, and independent living)
- Coordinated transition planning between district and outside agencies to support student with independent living, education and work when they exit from district program.

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Chronic Absenteeism

- District wide commitment to continuous improvement in the area of attendance
- Develop district and school site attendance teams that are cross-functional and leverage the knowledge of key stakeholders including students, families, school staff (including teachers) and community partners who track and monitor district and school site attendance data
- Use attendance data to track and intervene when students are chronically absent
- Develop clear, consistent district wide attendance and enrollment policies
- Proactive outreach to students and their families to minimize barriers with enrollment and attendance procedures
- Ensure effective practices, training, and processes are used to produce accurate attendance data
- Designated specific staff at the school and district levels who are responsible for monitoring attendance data
- Multi-tiered system that includes a spectrum of needed supports for students and their families
- Create a culture of attendance and a positive school climate
- Establish a consistent, organized, and respectful learning environment
- Utilize programs and strategies that support student engagement with adult staff (ie: PBIS, Positive Behavior Intervention Plans, and Restorative Practices)
- Promote culturally responsive teaching and social and emotional learning
- Use strategies to promote active student engagement
- Develop positive relationships with families and communicate with families early and often including when student is absent
- School based mentor who tracks and supports attendance
- School or district team conducts home visit when student has extensive absences

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Child Find

- Established and documented district wide Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)
- Coordination and collaboration between general and special educators on effective instruction and evidence-based interventions
- Embed Evidence-Based Practices for Early Childhood Evaluation into Local Policies, Procedures, and Practices
- Documented LEA wide procedures for referral and identification for special education
- Continuous quality improvement centered around the special education identification assessment process
- Professional development for staff around Child Find procedures and LEA policies for referral and identification of students for special education services
- Facilitate family engagement and communication so families are active participants in providing and receiving information regarding student progress and concerns
- Annual Search and Serve notice reviewed and posted on multiple platforms (electronic and print) and available in multiple languages
- Routinely provide Child Find information to local private schools
- Establish and monitor interagency collaboration and relationships with community partners such as Head Start, pediatric and family medical practices, and social services to ensure outreach occurs on a regular basis to support Child Find procedures and requirements
- Provide professional development for staff regarding Child Find requirements and the responsibility to assess students for special education when a student is suspected of having a disability

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