

POLICY 16

PROGRAM OPERATION STANDARDS

Adopted by Superintendents' Council 4/3/00

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SONOMA COUNTY SELPA
PROGRAM OPERATION STANDARDS

PHILOSOPHY, POLICY, AND PRACTICE

Continuum of Service:

The program operator is responsible for maintaining a program option in support of the SELPA-wide continuum of services. The operator will ensure that all eligible students from the SELPA, to the maximum extent possible and in accordance with local plan guidelines, are allowed to access the program option. Students from within the district shall have access to all other programs in the SELPA. The SELPA will develop coordination guidelines in collaboration with operators of programs for students with disabilities to ensure student access to all programs in the continuum.

IEP Implementation:

All operators of programs for students with disabilities will be responsible for implementation of each Individualized Education Program in accordance with the SELPA Local Plan and IDEA.

Inclusion of Students:

District and site administrators of programs for students with disabilities are responsible for fully ensuring the integration of all students. Students with disabilities will be integrated into the fabric of the daily life of each school campus to the fullest extent possible as appropriate for each IEP. This will include the provision of staff development, student awareness, and parent training as needed, to assure the highest level of inclusion, understanding, and acceptance possible. In addition, operators need to address all Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) issues relevant to the population served including, but not limited to, housing, toileting, and physical access to the campus and all its activities.

Multicultural/Bilingual:

Program operators must consider the cultural and linguistic needs of students and families in their programs. Planning for the needs of minorities should include access to bilingual assessors, culturally unbiased and translated assessment tools, access to interpreters and translators, provision of access to minority peers and multicultural activities when possible.

RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Fiscal Responsibility:

Program operators accepting funds to operate programs for students with disabilities must agree to fully support special education program needs as described in the Program Operation Standards.

Housing:

The operator will be responsible for providing housing that is appropriate for the age, developmental level, and programmatic needs of students served. Housing for students with disabilities is to be integrated with and in proximity to that of non-disabled peers with the exception of specialty classes or programs authorized by the SELPA. The operator is responsible for providing specialized equipment and/or accommodations needed to ensure eligible students' IEPs are fully implemented.

Loading Standards:

The operator determines loading standards for classes. Factors to be considered in determining loading standards are students' ages, disabilities, instructional needs of the students, the ability of staff to ensure the implementation of IEP goals and objectives, and the assurance of a safe instructional environment. Loading standards for program operation are to be consistent with the range of SELPA-wide averages. Operators wishing to deviate from SELPA-wide averages or develop an innovative delivery system are required to seek prior approval from the SELPA Steering Committee.

Equipment Standards:

The operator will ensure that equipment sufficient to ensure the health and safety of students and staff is provided. In addition, the operator will provide all equipment needed to implement the IEPs of all students in the program.

Staff Development and Community Awareness:

Operators will ensure that sufficient staff development and training opportunities are available in their region or district to maintain quality programs and services for students with disabilities.

Operators will support fiscally and with staff time, SELPA-wide planning for and presentation of, on-going staff development and parent trainings related to programs for students with disabilities.

Operators will conduct ongoing community awareness trainings sufficient to ensure the support and acceptance of students with disabilities on school campuses and at selected community sites where students' IEPs may be implemented.

Instructional Materials:

Operators are responsible for providing all instructional materials required to implement students' IEPs. Materials required include age or developmentally appropriate core curriculum as well as specialized curriculum and materials specific to classroom and individual student needs.

STAFFING AND LEADERSHIP

Staffing Patterns:

Staffing patterns are determined by the program operator, unless required in the Education Code or a specific IEP. Factors to be considered in determining staffing patterns are the ages and disabilities of the students, instructional needs, the ability of the staff to implement the IEP, the health and safety of the students, and specific IEP requirements. Staffing patterns are to be consistent with the range of SELPA-wide averages. Operators wishing to deviate from SELPA-wide averages or develop an innovative staffing pattern are required to seek prior SELPA Steering Committee approval.

Supervision:

Operators will provide credentialed administrative supervision of all classes sufficient to ensure the safety of the students and staff, the implementation of all elements of students' IEPs and programs as authorized by the State of California.

Credentials:

Operators will staff all positions that require credentials with personnel who are specifically authorized by the State of California to provide instruction or services in the area of student need.

Licenses:

All non-credentialed service providers, e.g., Speech/Language Therapists, Licensed Vocational Nurses, Registered Nurses, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, are required to have licensing as specified by CAC Title 5 Regulations. Non-credentialed service providers shall demonstrate proof of insurability.

Paraprofessionals:

Paraprofessional staff do not require certification or licensing, but require ongoing supervision by a qualified professional. The operator will provide on-the-job training and opportunities to participate in ongoing staff development to ensure the smooth operation of the program and the implementation of student IEPs.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parent Participation:

Operators will provide regularly scheduled forums for parent involvement in the ongoing development and implementation of the program.

INTERAGENCY AGREEMENTS

Operators will be responsible for implementing all SELPA interagency agreements relevant to the level of service provided. Operators are required to participate in the planning, development, and maintenance of all relevant interagency agreements needed to operate the program.

ASSESSMENTS

The program operator shall be responsible for ensuring that students placed in a program have been appropriately assessed and found eligible for placement in Special Education. Assessment instruments shall reflect current best practice for the population being assessed. Assessments are to be conducted within settings that are appropriate to the age and abilities of the student. Staff is to be current in the use of assessment tools and techniques relevant to the population being assessed.

INSTRUCTION AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Instructional Grouping:

Operators will determine the instructional grouping of students, ensuring that each IEP can be implemented and that the instructional setting is age appropriate and compatible with groupings of non-disabled peers. Deviations from standard program operation shall be submitted to the SELPA Steering Committee for review.

Instructional Methodology:

Operators will determine the instructional methodology based on students' age, disability, the requirements of the IEP, and the need to maintain a continuum of classes within the SELPA in conformity with district curriculum standards.

Designated Instruction and Services (DIS):

The operator is responsible for the provision of all DIS services required by students' IEP. Where indicated by the IEP or programmatically appropriate, the collaborative delivery of Designated Instruction and Services will be continued by the operator.

Appropriate Curriculum:

Students with disabilities shall have access to the general curriculum with appropriate accommodations and modifications. Operators will use developmentally and or age/grade appropriate curriculum in all instructional settings. Curriculum will be selected to address the assessed needs of students in the program.

Transition programs for students age 18-22 will use curriculum which addresses student need in the following instructional domains: Vocational, Community Access, Independent Living and Functional Academics. Students may be integrated in the general education environment and may have access to general education curriculum as determined by the IEP team.

TRANSITION

Operators, in coordination with the SELPA, will be responsible for planning, coordinating and implementing seamless transitions between programs and agencies for all students served. This could include the development of separate Memos Of Understanding with other agencies, training of staff on transition issues, the development of community based instructional settings and the joint development of individual Family Service Plans or Individual Transition Plans.

- Transition planning must begin at age 14 for all special education students.
- Transition planning for students with severe disabilities at secondary and post secondary levels must include linkages to agencies that provide adult services.
- Transition planning for this population must also address instruction in the following domains: Vocational, Community Access, Independent Living and Functional Academics.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Program evaluation is the joint responsibility of the program operators and the SELPA. In addition to the SELPA requirement that operators adhere to Program Operation Standards agreed to in this document, all programs will be regularly evaluated against program quality indicators developed by the SELPA and the State Department of Education.