



EFFECTIVENESS & EFFICIENCY REVIEWS



Full Report

Prepared for the

Board of Education

Lawrence Special Education #497

January 2017



Center for Innovative School Leadership

EMPORIA STATE
UNIVERSITY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	2
Lawrence Special Education USD #497 Profile	3
Comparisons to Peer and Region Schools	3
Highlights from Reports	3
Highlights from the Efficiency and Effectiveness Review Survey Results	7
Team Reports	10
Delivery of Services	11
Human Resources	20
Organization and Leadership	29
Supplemental School Profile Information	33

INTRODUCTION

The function of the Center for Innovative School Leadership (CISL) is to conduct school efficiency reviews for school districts and special education departments on a voluntary basis to help them realize greater efficiency and effectiveness. CISL was created through Kansas Senate Bill No. 304 in the 2004 legislative session.

The review process used by CISL is modeled after successful programs conducted in Arizona, Texas, and Virginia. The goal of CISL is to identify best practices, cost savings, and potential efficiency and effectiveness strategies for school districts and special education programs in the areas of delivery of services, human resources, and organization and leadership.

Information found through the review process are provided in the introduction, including:

- **an overview of the Lawrence Special Education department**
- **a comparison of the Lawrence Special Education department to peer special education programs**
- **highlights from reports written by team members who interviewed school district personnel**
- **Effectiveness and Efficiency School Review survey results**

A full report will be issued following the presentation of the executive summary. All reports are public documents.



LAWRENCE SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

The Lawrence Special Education department volunteered to participate in the school efficiency review process. We thank them for their willingness to be involved with this project.

The review of the Lawrence Special Education department was initiated in April 2016 and concluded in January 2017. This report will identify best practices of the Lawrence Special Education department and provide suggestions on ways to further improve their operation efficiencies.

Lawrence Special Education department profile information:

- The Lawrence Special Education department is one of 73 Inter-locals, Cooperative, and stand-alone programs in the state of Kansas.
- The average economically disadvantaged population of the district is 39.3%; this compares to 49.7% for the state.
- The Lawrence Special Education department employs 302 para-educators and 219 licensed staff.
- The Lawrence Special Education department has a total of 1,504 students with exceptionalities.
- Lawrence USD #497 has a total headcount of 12,106. The population has increased by 1.4% over the last three years.

COMPARISONS TO PEER ORGANIZATIONS

CISL has established peer organizations to support comparability of selected criteria. There were eight peer organizations selected based on similar overall size. The peer organizations include Salina Coop #305, Paola Coop #368, Geary County #475, Butler County Interlocal #490, Topeka #501, South West Kansas Coop #613, Sedgwick Coop #618, and South East Kansas Coop #637. Comparisons between Lawrence Special Education program and these peer schools are explored in further detail in the complete report; the full report also includes all school survey results, and the full finding by the Lawrence review team.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM REPORTS

Team members were selected to evaluate the school district in the areas of human resources, delivery of services, and organization and leadership. Each team member submitted reports with findings, commendations, recommendations / opportunities for improvement, and impacts. An extended report will be submitted in the future with the full findings. Included here are highlights from the commendations, recommendations, and projected impacts.

COMMENDATIONS:

Human Resources

Human Resources Procedure

1. Parents feel staff are well trained. Communication is also a strength.
2. Specialized programs (Autism) perceived as exemplary and attractive for parents.

Organizational Chart

1. Parents express confidence in staff knowledge and procedural proficiency.

Job Descriptions and Evaluation Instruments

1. Excellent classified handbook.

Delivery of Services

December 1 count history

1. While the trend over the past three years is an increase in identified students, the district is under-identified in comparison to peer districts, yet comparable to state-wide data. The district is to be commended for managing the identification process well and not over-identifying students.

Identification of Students

1. The district's leadership is to be commended for addressing inequity in identification of students. While not statistically disproportionate, there are some discrepancies and the district is planning to address this issue, prior to being found to have a disproportionality compliance issue in this area.

Report of Status of Formal Complaints

1. Considering the size of the district and its location, the relatively low number of complaints indicates there are appropriate processes and procedures in place to address concerns and find resolution in a timely manner.

Organization and Leadership

Board Communication

1. The district has a culture of being highly inclusive.
2. The special education department is widely respected both locally and regionally.
3. The district leadership is to be highly commended for including the special education director in the superintendent's cabinet.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Human Resources

Certified Contract

- It is recommended the Special Education administration, in collaboration with HR, conduct a study to determine which paraeducator positions/assignments have the highest rate of absenteeism and consider a salary schedule for paraeducators that is multi-tiered and compensates individuals employed in challenging or skilled position, if those are where the high rates of absenteeism occur.

Impact: This would enhance retention of paraeducators, particularly in those hard to retain positions.

Human Resources Procedure

1. It is recommended the district offer individualized, job specific training for new paraeducators, provided by itinerant specialists and special education teachers.

Impact: This would improve para efficacy and the quality of student services.

Organizational Chart

1. It is recommended the district continue to monitor and evaluate the new administrative restructured model created the summer of 2016.

Impact: This would determine effectiveness and efficiency of the restructuring model.

Professional Development Plan

1. It is recommended the district examine support for all services offered on the continuum of services, specifically examining how to support co-teaching.

Impact: This would support continued efforts in school improvement for both general and special education services.

Delivery of Services

Delivery Models

1. It is recommended the district study the use of the co-teaching model and consider planning for district-wide implementation. As part of this recommendation, select a co-teaching delivery model, with district offerings of professional development. Have each school establish a goal for implementation, including professional development in their school improvement plans.

Consider the Villa/Thousand model for access to state-wide training and support.

Impact: This would allow more students access to general education curriculum, and access to teachers who are licensed to teach the content, supported by specialists who can assist in designing modifications and accommodations in the general education curriculum.

2. It is recommended the district consider piloting one diagnostic placement program for primary or intermediate students with emotional disturbance.



Impact: The could allow for better control over which students are placed, long-term, in district cluster programs. A diagnostic placement would help determine who would need that intense, long term level of services, in a highly restrictive placement.

Identification of Students

1. It is recommended the district develop a plan for improvement in the area of disproportionate representation, establishing a goal that no group will be over two times discrepant. This would likely require a year of studying data, a year planning and beginning implementation, and three to five years to see significant changes in trend data.

Impact: The district would avoid a future disproportionate representation compliance issue.

Mentoring Program

1. It is recommended the district use the successful mentoring program to incorporate similar components in providing updated professional development for veteran teachers and paraeducators. Consider using technology to capture presentations and make them available for anyone to view at their convenience. Possibilities are vast, but one point that cannot be stressed enough is that the district needs a consistent message and this is one way to achieve that.

Impact: This would provide all teachers (and paraeducators, if you choose) up to date information and a reference record. This would also contribute to consistency in messaging.

Organization and Leadership

Board Communication

1. It is recommended the special education staff be surveyed to help determine the cause of the perceived low morale.

Impact: This would enable district administration to develop a plan to remedy the low morale.

2. It is recommended the district increase the special education program efforts to acquaint all district staff with the available placement options.

Impact: This would enhance staff's ability to accommodate the needs of highly aggressive/disruptive students while minimizing the effect on the learning climate.

3. It is recommended the district review the continuum of alternative services, focusing on utilizing all resources available in maintaining highly disruptive students in their neighborhood schools.

Impact: By maximizing the resources available within the district to address severe needs, building staff would have additional options at their disposal.

4. It is recommended the district review the service delivery model to identify and remove the impediments to providing the services as indicated on the IEP.

Impact: Providing the services agreed upon in the IEP would improve the learning opportunities for the students served as well as insure the district is in compliance with IDEA requirements.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY SCHOOL REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS

ADMINISTRATORS SURVEY RESULTS

Of the administrators in the Lawrence School District, 31 completed the survey. Of all the statements administrators were asked to respond to, the items below were the ones receiving the strongest responses.

Commendations from Administrators:

- Nearly 71% of the administrators believe the SPED program (gifted and students with disabilities) has a perception of a positive “climate”.
- 87% of the administrators believe the SPED program (gifted and students with disabilities) provides them with adequate information.
- 77% of the administrators believe the SPED program (gifted and students with disabilities) keeps the IEP process and meetings efficient.
- Nearly 71% of the administrators said the school sees the special education staff as a part of the team.

Recommendations from Administrators:

- 48% of the administrators do not believe the SPED program (gifted and students with disabilities) provides support for ensuring the Student Intervention Team (SIT) process is in place and functioning correctly.
- Nearly 68% of the administrators do not believe the SPED program (gifted and students with disabilities) provides adequate training for general education teachers and staff who work with children with special education needs.
- 29% of the administrators do not believe the SPED program (gifted and students with disabilities) ensures adequate support for special education students, (if provided in special education classrooms).
- 58% of the administrators feel there are re-occurring special education issues that need to be resolved.

TEACHERS/STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

Of all the teachers/staff in the Lawrence School District, 458 completed the survey. Of all the statements teachers/staff were asked to respond to, the items below were the ones receiving the strongest responses.

Commendations from Teachers/Staff:

- Nearly 69% of the teachers/staff believe the special education department communicates appropriately with them.
- 66% of the teachers/staff believe the special education department ensures interventions are appropriate for special education students relative to making adequate progress.
- Nearly 71% % of the teachers/staff believe the special education department supports a tiered intervention system of student services in their building.

Recommendations from Teachers/Staff:

- 50% of the teachers/staff do not believe the special education department provides adequate training for general education teachers and staff who work with children with IEPs.
- 39% of the teachers/staff do not believe the special education department provides adequate instructional material for them.
- Almost 22% of the teachers/staff do not believe the special education department provides adequate training for them as a special education staff member.

PARENTS' SURVEY RESULTS

Of all the parents in the Lawrence School District, 367 completed the survey. Of all the statements parents were asked to respond to, the items below were the ones receiving the strongest responses.

Commendations from Parents:

- 71% of the parents believe their child is receiving educational serviced that help them improve academically.
- Nearly 67% of the parents feel the staff has received adequate training for the special education jobs they are doing.
- Almost 79% of the parents thought the meetings they attend for their child with the special education staff is efficient.

Recommendations from Parents:

- 43% of the parents do not believe their child is receiving educational services that help them improve behaviorally.



Team Reports

Lawrence Special Education #497

DELIVERY OF SERVICES

Findings

Report of Status of Formal Complaints

- The district shared eight (8) complaints filed within the past three years.
- Five complaints were resolved as follows:
 - Issues were mediated and a settlement was reached;
 - Issues were resolved when the district contacted the parent with a proposal for resolving the issue and the parent agreed to the proposal;
 - KSDE closed the complaint after the district proposed a resolution, contact with the parent was attempted in several ways, and KSDE accepted the district's resolution;
 - A complaint was filed but subsequently withdrawn by the parent.
- At this time, there is an active OCR complaint pending. The district shared that the complaint was filed, the district has been notified, and no resolution had been reached at the time of the visit.

Mentoring Program

- The district provides two years of state required mentoring for teachers on initial licensure from KSDE.
- The district provides special education job alike mentors for teachers new to the district.
- The district has designed and provided, in writing, a mentoring format that provides new special education teachers with specific information at specific times. There is also a specific professional development sequence for first and second year teachers.
- The district provides a Blackboard course for all new teachers.
- During the district's induction process, the coaches provide all new teachers a presentation about everyone's role in the special education process.
- During the induction process, new special education teachers are provided one day of professional development about IEP development, procedures, and progress monitoring.

IEP Samples

- The district provided ten IEPs for perusal. The ten IEPs crossed age levels (3-19) and provided a cross section of exceptionalities.
- IEP files were compliant and contained the following, as appropriate: Notice of Meeting; Consent to Invite Outside Representatives; Excusal from Attendance at IEP Meetings of General Education Teacher; the IEP, including goals and benchmarks based on data collection; Transition Plan – Age 14 and Up; Meeting Notes; Behavior Plan; and Prior Written Notice.

MIS or SPP Reports

- FY15 Graduation Rate, Target Met
- *FY15 Drop Out Rate, target not met*
- Timely Evaluation, Target Met
- Transition from Part C to part B, Target Met
- Secondary Transition, Target Met
- FY15 Continuum of Services requirements met on all indicators EC-21
 - In interviews with all groups, participants claimed a lack of a continuum of services
 - In surveys, participants claimed there are not enough alternative placements on the continuum
 - In findings, the districts do provide a full continuum of alternative placements in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

LRE	Gen Ed 80%	Target Met
LRE	SPED 60%	Target Met
LRE	Separate Setting	Target Met
LRE	Reg EC	Target Met
LRE	EC Separate Facility	Target Met
 - In interviewing all groups, it appears there is a lack of understanding of the continuum of alternative placements and how critical this compliance matter is to the district. Lawrence schools are required to serve 65% of their students with disabilities in general education settings a minimum of 80% of their time; they met this indicator by serving 79.24% in general education settings. Kansas allows only 7.35% of the district's students be removed from the general education setting and placed in a special education setting for 60% of their placement, which is considered self-contained; the district met this at 4.84% in general ed 40% of their day.

Delivery Models

- The district utilizes general education settings for consultation support in the classroom by specialists and direct support from para-educators.
- The district utilizes a combination of general and special education settings for direct service by specialists and para-educators.



- Some schools choose to utilize the best practice of co-teaching. In surveys and interviews, school staff report there is no incentive to do so as there is no time for co-planning in the weekly schedule.
- The district utilizes cluster programs. In surveys and interviews there is a lack of understanding of building data, expectations for LRE placements, and criteria for entrance and exit to cluster programs.
- During interviews, both administrators and teachers expressed frustration that students enter and exit cluster programs with little transition planning.

December 1 count history

- The identification of students is increasing each year. The increase over two years is an additional 85 students. However, district data sets are comparable to state counts and are in compliance.
- In interviews, participants expressed concerns that students are rarely dismissed from special education services and questioned how to establish entry and exit criteria for special education services.
- In interviews and surveys, participants expressed concerns regarding entry criteria for separate special education settings, specifically for students with Emotional Disturbance.

State Assessments Results

- Reading participation in state assessments for FY15, target not met.
- Math participation in state assessments for FY15, target not met
- Reading is meeting state-wide targets for performance.
- Math is not meeting state-wide targets for performance.

Identification of Students

- Like the national and state trend, there is an increase in students identified for special education services. As compared to other districts, the identification rate is well below peer districts in percent identified and comparable to state trend data.
- For comparison, in 2014-2015:
 - Lawrence 13.8 of student population identified as disabled
 - Paola 17.2
 - Salina 18.3
 - Topeka 17.3

Kansas Data for comparison:

- 2011 13.58
- 2012 13.66
- 2013 13.74
- 2014 13.73



- 2015 13.89
- Administration reported a concern of trend data indicating a discrepancy in the identification rates of students when analyzed by race/ethnicity. In reviewing by race/ethnicity, students in some disability categories are identified at discrepant rates or over two times more likely to be identified, but none were found to be disproportionate i.e., over three times more likely to be identified in specific categories.
- The state compliance report finds the district meeting disproportionate representation targets, when analyzing all race/ethnicity categories. Trend data indicates discrepancies across groups.
- The state compliance report finds the district meeting suspension and expulsion targets when analyzed by ethnicity.

COMMENDATIONS:

Report of Status of Formal Complaints

1. Mediation has been used successfully to resolve some complaints.
2. When findings from a formal complaint required corrective action, those actions were taken by the district and completed to the satisfaction of KSDE.
3. Considering the size of the district and its location, the relatively low number of complaints indicates there are appropriate processes and procedures in place to address concerns and find resolution in a timely manner.

Mentoring Program

1. The mentoring program is robust and provides professional development in the vast number of areas required for special education teachers.
2. Staff members seemed positive about mentoring/coaching and believe it to be of value.

IEP Samples

1. There was anecdotal evidence that an older student made a presentation at and actively participated in his/her IEP meeting.
2. Parent involvement/participation was evident in meeting notes and in the incorporation of parents' suggestions for IEP goals.
3. Extended School Year (ESY) appears to be based on need, and those services are tailored to fit the skill needs and amount of time needs of those students receiving the services.
4. It appears that the IEPs are readily accessible to required compliance reports. While no system is completely foolproof, this one appears to provide prompts that lead the writer to complete all requirements.



5. These ten IEPs were, in fact, individualized. The reader had a sense of who these students were and what was required for them to be successful in an academic environment. The same can be said about the Behavior Plans that were made available.

MIS or SPP Reports FY15

1. Graduation rates in Lawrence are 82.68% and are above the statewide target of 80% by 2.68%. This is one of the priority indicators of success for students identified as disabled.
2. Reading assessments met statewide targets, which could be attributed to a focus on this area, the general education curriculum in Reading, the placement of students in the general education setting at an LRE level, and the system of tiered interventions in place.
3. All LRE indicators met statewide targets, indicating excellence in this continuum of services compliance matter.
4. Early Childhood services met both LRE and Outcome indicators.
5. Education evaluations were completed within 60 school days at a rate of 100%, which is to be commended.
6. Transitioning students from Infant Toddler services to School-aged (3-5) services was completed at 100% level, which must be met or districts are out of compliance.
7. Secondary transition was also met at a 100% level and post-school outcome indicators met state-wide targets

December 1 count history

1. While the trend over the past three years is an increase in identified students, the district is under-identified in comparison to peer districts, yet comparable to state-wide data. The district is to be commended for managing the identification process well and not over-identifying students.
2. Lawrence, utilizes a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) to intervene early and prevent the need for special education, which is to be highly commended. MTSS not only offers schools a systematic method to intervene early, but districts which use a protocol approach to assist in determining if students require special education services can better plan IEP's with high quality baseline data, to be used as entry and exit criteria.

State Assessment Commendations

1. Reading Assessments met state-wide targets, which is to be commended as those targets continue to increase.
2. All five Early Childhood Outcome indicators met state-wide targets, which is to be commended.



Identification of Students

1. There are only two major compliance areas which address race/ethnicity. One is a national trend of over-identifying some groups of students for special education and the other is a concern around the higher suspension and expulsion rates of these same groups. The district is to be commended on meeting these two compliance indicators and be recognized for studying trend data to identify areas for improvement to prevent disproportionality:
 - The state compliance report finds the district meeting the first target, which focuses on disproportionate representation, when analyzing disability categories by race/ethnicity.
 - The state compliance report also finds on the second area, with the district meeting suspension and expulsion targets, when analyzed by race/ethnicity.
2. The district's leadership is to be commended for addressing inequity in identification of students. While not statistically disproportionate, there are some discrepancies and the district is planning to address this issue, prior to being found to have a disproportionality compliance issue in this area.

RECOMMENDATIONS / IMPACTS:

Report of Status of Formal Complaints

1. It is recommended the special education program continue to meet required timelines, investigate, and provide required information to resolve issues, when a complaint arrives
Impact: This would continue compliance for the program.
2. It is recommended the special education program review complaints of a similar nature, looking for the systemic issues that need to be addressed. Specifically, trend data referenced in other areas of this report indicates an urgent need to address those areas before they become potential areas for formal complaints. A rigorous MTSS process, consistently implemented throughout the district, is recommended.
Impact: This proactive planning would be more effective and efficient than the hours spent on reactive data and evidence collection.

Mentoring Program

1. It is recommended the special education program use the successful mentoring program to incorporate similar components in providing updated professional development for veteran teachers and paraprofessionals. If you do not already do so, consider using technology to capture presentations and make them available for everyone to view. Possibilities are vast, but one point that cannot be stressed enough is that you need a consistent message and this is one way to achieve that.
Impact: This would provide all teachers (and paraprofessionals, if you choose) up to date information and a means to refer back to it, should they so desire. This would also contribute to consistency in messaging.

IEP Samples

1. It is recommended the special education program consider using an IEP review process as a professional development activity. When teachers review the work, either their own or that of

others, it gives them a fresh perspective. By using the KSDE format, a review process also refreshes everyone's understanding (answers many questions) about why the IEP is written to include the elements that are required.

Impact: This would provide self-discovery of potential issues and provide a professional means to identify and resolve said issues. It can also provide a way to reinforce, "We do a great job in this area, and this is why..."

MIS or SPP Reports

1. It is recommended the special education program review cohort data to analyze the drop out prevalence rate of students by schools, disability categories, gender, age of drop out, and reason for drop out. Establish a school improvement goal for each school where their rate of drop-out is above the state-wide target (consider including feeder pattern schools in this goal).

Impact: Individual schools will meet compliance indicators and more students will graduate and complete their individualized programs.

Delivery Models Recommendations

1. It is recommended the district study the use of the co-teaching model and consider planning for district-wide implementation. As part of this recommendation, select a co-teaching delivery model, with district offerings of professional development. Have each school establish a goal for implementation, including professional development in their school improvement plans. Consider the Villa/Thousand model for access to state-wide training and support.

Impact: This would allow more students access to general education curriculum, and access to teachers who are licensed to teach the content, supported by specialists who can assist in designing modifications and accommodations in the curriculum.

2. It is recommended the district provide each building with a compliance report on their data. It is also recommended they establish and communicate clear entrance and exit criteria for these self-contained placements. It is imperative a special education administrator reviews the building data with building leadership so they clearly understand their data in establishing goals. It is recommended the district intensely train building crisis teams to address students with emotional disturbances as emotional disturbance incidences are increasing across all school districts.

Impact: Self-contained program placements are a significant expense and site-based decisions can better be informed by understanding their prevalence data, being better prepared to serve students in their home schools, and know the criteria for entrance into and exit out of these few programs.

3. It is recommended the district consider piloting one diagnostic placement program for primary or intermediate students with emotional disturbance by:
 - Identifying not more than five students from two or three schools for a short-term (not more than one semester) pilot program, diagnostic placement.
 - Utilize supports from community therapists, district psychologists, social workers, behavior specialists, counselors, principals and general ed teachers in observing students in their home environments, determining a short-term diagnostic placement for them, establishing a goal to re-enter the student to their home school during the next semester.



- Establish goals for re-entry and spend one semester intensely training the student with replacement behaviors, preparing the home school with supports for re-entry of the student during the following semester.
- Only if it is determined a student cannot be transitioned back to their home school, will they be placed in one of the district's cluster programs.
- A district support team needs to follow-up after all transitions, evaluating the diagnostic placement.
Impact: This would allow for better control over who is placed long-term in district cluster programs. A diagnostic placement would help determine who would need that intense, long term level of services, in a highly restrictive placement.

December 1 count history

1. It is recommended, before making any staffing decisions, the district conduct an analysis of IEP minutes per building to compare teams' minutes of service for identified students, reviewing how staffing decisions are determined for each building, and indicating both prevalence and census data. The current data seems to reflect adequate staffing but it is critical the IEP minutes are reviewed.
Impact: Prior to making a recommendation for increased staffing, the district will have adequate data for decision-making and balanced caseloads across the district.

State Assessments Results

1. It is recommended the district request each school review their building rates and prioritize 98% + participate in state assessments (consider analyzing those in cluster programs both in home school data reporting and cluster school data).
Impact: This would increase their state assessment participation rate so that 98% + of the students provided with special education services are monitored and compared against high state standards.
2. It is recommended the district review the tiered intervention resources utilized for Math to assure they align with state standards, also monitoring modified resources used when Math is taught in special education settings.
Impact: This would be a review topic for the district's school improvement plan.

Identification of Students

1. It is recommended the district develop a plan for improvement in the area of disproportionate representation, establishing a goal that no group will be over two times discrepant. This will likely require a year of studying data, a year planning and beginning implementation, and three to five years to see significant changes in trend data. Here are some possible action steps.
 - Provide a copy of the current prevalence report to the Board of Education. As of the date of this review, that report has been shared. Continue to share this data set annually.
 - Conduct a thorough study of data not required for compliance reporting by KSDE. This would include an analysis of race/ethnicity and gender data on rates of:
 - a. state assessment proficiency,



- b. graduation (elementary/middle schools shown in high school feeder patterns),
 - c. discipline data (including under 10 days of suspension),
 - d. tiered intervention outcomes,
 - e. referrals and outcomes (disaggregate by parent referrals and intervention team referrals),
 - f. early childhood identification,
 - g. move-in identification data,
 - h. special education dismissals, and
 - i. by building, identify grade level referral/identification rates.
- Plan for professional development with both district-wide offerings and resources available to the building level.
 - Disaggregate this same data, by school, and have a series of special education administrator led meetings reviewing each school's data with each building's leadership team, including their school psychologist.
 - Report this data to the district leadership team and have this team analyze for systemic issues and specific feeder pattern trends.
 - Special education administrators conduct reviews of school referral rates by race/ethnicity, specifying a comparison of identification rates, and sharing with school psychologists.
 - School psychologists conduct a review of their assessment tools to determine the level of bias in each and consider adding additional intervention (MTSS) data collection sets/data points, checklists, product reviews, and more observations into the evaluation process.
 - School psychologists lead a review of placements for discrepant findings, and sign an assurance that each student is eligible under a category. If a case is of concern, conduct a re-evaluation.
 - School psychologists identify the building(s) rates of representation and determine the exact student count where their school(s) is two times discrepant.
 - With this number in mind, establish a goal for the building leadership team to monitor and assure it is communicated to school staff. No discrepancy in data is the ultimate goal, but with so many uncontrolled variables, a goal of under two times discrepant can be appropriate.
 - In schools where there are categories which are over two-times discrepant, require all referrals be reviewed by special education administrators prior to parental consent for evaluation. If this is a large number of cases to review, consider using a review team approach, utilizing assessment specialists meeting weekly with administrators.
 - Emphasize that in order to become eligible for special education it requires a significant amount of diagnostic time and no schools would want to label a student as disabled without a year or two of intervention trend data to support other diagnostic findings. There are some rare exceptions as allowed by regulation.

Impact: The district would avoid a future disproportionate representation compliance issue.



Human Resources

Findings

Human Resources Procedures

- Explicit, clear, effective Human Resources (HR) procedures for licensed personnel.
- Buildings obtain all teacher substitutes.
- District special education administration and the HR department select and assign licensed personnel.
- HR uses a detailed process flow chart for hiring.
- Classified (paraeducators) paid from electronic time clock for hours during pay period.
- Classified (paraeducators) paid August – May.
- Paraeducator substitutes are obtained for absences beyond three days.
- Principals and special education administrators procure paraeducator substitutes.

Staff Allocation Reports

- Current licensed vacancies for 2016-2017 school year – Six special education teachers, two related services.
- Special education learning coaches added for 2016-2017 school year.
- Special education administration – One Executive Director and three Assistant Directors.
- Special education Administrative Assistants – 4, Database Support – 1, Records Secretary – 1.
- District employs: Special Education Facilitators – 5, Mental Health Facilitator – 1, Special Education Learning Coach – 3, Autism/Behavior Consultant – 5.
- Caseload Data – Resource classroom 10-15, Specialized classrooms 6-8, Speech Language average caseload - 42.



Staff Allocation Procedures

- Detailed, objective, FTE formulas determine special education licensed and classified assignments for schools.
- Parents feel the district has the appropriate number of special education licensed staff and special education teachers are knowledgeable and well trained.
- Focus groups indicate concerns related to paraeducator availability and para educator substitute shortages.
- Special education personnel are assigned to all schools and special purpose facilities.
- Mental health personnel reported to be a high district priority.
- Special education teachers are hired and assigned by special education administration.
- Limited visibility and consultation with special education administration noted by staff and administration.
- Principals collaborate with special education administration and HR for long term paraeducator substitutes and replacement para educators.
- The district contracted with a local agency for paraeducator subs.
- HR and special education administration select and assign para educators.
- Lack of clarity for assigning paraeducators.

Certified Contract

- Master agreement between Lawrence Education Association and the Lawrence Public Schools Board of Education governs employment for licensed personnel.
- Base contract is 186-190 days.
- Duty day – Eight hours for all certified full time employees.
- Extra duty days – Special Education Facilitators – 20, Special Education Learning Coaches – 5, School Psychologists – 5.
- Full time employees receive full fringe benefit. Less than full time receive a proration of fringe benefit.
- Longevity pay provided.
- Professional development points may be applied to the salary schedule.

- Additional stipends for “non-movement” college hours available.
- Mentoring compensation available.
- Benefits include: Medical/dental/vision insurance, Section 125 plan, other insurance and retirement options.
- Average retention rate for licensed employees.
- Tuition reimbursement offered for “qualified” individuals.
- No differential salary schedule for paraeducators.

Professional Development Plan

- Summer professional development opportunities are provided.
- No formal district infrastructure to support co-teaching delivery model.
- 68% of the staff reported they are not receiving adequate training for working with children with special needs.
- Special education teachers indicate need for additional pedagogy and IEP training.
- Training in Assistive Technology provided, but more specific training is desired for teachers and paraeducators.
- Licensed employees develop a specific, individual learning plan.
- Job-alikes are not available for special education teachers.
- Special education learning coaches train on IEP’s.
- ESI training provided for all employees.
- Special education teachers report inadequate time to train paraeducators.
- Special education teachers lack awareness of para training options.
- On-line resources are available for paraeducators.



- Paraeducators are familiar with student IEP's and BIPS.

Organizational Chart

- District special education administration reorganized summer 2016.
- Principals and special education teachers lack clarification of problem solving responsibilities.
- Special education administration currently meets two times a month – agenda related to meeting planning, current needs, follow-up and hot spots.
- Special education administration meets with building administrators for information sharing, feedback and problem solving.
- Related services providers indicate need for increased special education administration access.

Job Descriptions and Evaluation Instruments

- Implementing new collaborative evaluation model for special education teachers this year.
- Detailed and comprehensive classified handbook updated in July 2016.

COMMENDATIONS:

Human Resources Procedure

1. Parents feel staff are well trained. Communication is also a strength.
2. Perceived high quality services offered by district.
3. Survey data indicates staff are approachable and good listeners.
4. Parent survey data reports education services improve students academically and services are efficient.
5. Specialized programs (autism) perceived as exemplary and attractive for parents.
6. Minority recruiting and equity employment goals for licensed and classified staff.

Staff Allocation Reports

1. Detailed HR hiring process flow chart.

Staff Allocation Procedures

1. Staff deployed to address prioritized mental health services – social workers, autism consults, behavior coaches.
2. Extensive support services (consultants and facilitators) for special education teachers.
3. Detailed and objective data caseload criteria for personnel resource allocation.
4. Related services providers (SP and SLP) considered strengths.
5. Wide range of services and partnerships offered for students.
6. Special education learning coaches added during the 2016-2017 school year to support special education teachers.

Certified Contract

1. Tuition reimbursement available for special education licensure.
2. Movement” dollars available for eligible employees.
3. Extensive fringe opportunities.
4. Sophisticated detailed negotiated agreement.
5. Paras participate in fringe package.

Professional Development Plan

1. District administration recognize the critical priorities for professional development in the areas of training and intervention for students with severe disabilities.
2. Additional summer professional development opportunities offered in targeted areas.
3. Assistive technology training for teachers and paraeducators
4. Late start schedule could provide capacity for collaboration, communication and training activities.
5. Professional development and mentoring for new special education teachers provides instructional support for core instruction and intervention during school year.
6. Individual plans required for paraeducators.
7. Financial resources allocated for paraeducator professional development.



Organizational Chart

1. Special education administration viewed as approachable, supportive and a valuable resource by building administration.
2. Parents express confidence in staff knowledge and procedural proficiency.
3. Reorganization of district administrators organizational chart elevated Executive Director of Student Services to Superintendent Leadership Team.
4. Director of Student Services to Superintendent Leadership Team.

Job Descriptions and Evaluation Instruments

1. Excellent classified handbook.

RECOMMENDATIONS / IMPACTS:

Human Resources Procedure

1. It is recommended the district analyze para interview procedures to improve applicant understanding and retention.
Impact: This would improve selection and retention of employees that would lead to increased student productivity and a cost savings to the district by not having to continuously hire replacement positions.
2. It is recommended the district examine strategies to increase employee retention.
Impact: This would improve employee retention.
3. It is recommended the district provide related services with structured regular access to special education administration.
Impact: This would increase communication related to caseloads, assignments, services and para support.
4. It is recommended the district consider developing a functional/severe paraeducator sub pool to maintain appropriate services for students with severe disabilities.
Impact: This would maintain continuity of services and reduce safety risks.
5. It is recommended the district consider a paraeducator float pool to address paraeducator absences in functional/severe classrooms.
Impact: This would maintain continuity of services and reduce safety risks.
6. It is recommended the district offer individualized, job specific training for new paraeducators, provided by itinerant specialists and special education teachers.
Impact: This would improve para efficacy and the quality of student services.
7. It is recommended the district develop a plan to increase morale (e.g., personal contact from directors/supervisors, notes of appreciation, recognition events).
Impact: This would improve employee morale.

8. It is recommended the district utilize a comprehensive exit interview process to obtain data via personal contact rather than paper/pencil survey.

Impact: This would deepen district understanding of attrition.

Staff Allocation Reports

1. It is recommended the district assess accountability/schedule of traveling teachers and specialists with building administrators.

Impact: This would increase knowledge of schedules and accountability for traveling teachers and specialists.

Staff Allocation Procedures

1. It is recommended the district establish a schedule for the Assistant Directors to ensure regular contact with schools.

Impact: This would facilitate consultation and flow of information with schools.

2. It is recommended the district have the special education Learning Coaches use performance logs to determine roles, responsibilities and efficiencies.

Impact: This would boost productivity and accountability.

3. It is recommended the district develop a team of administrators and teachers to review and evaluate the recruiting and assignment of paraeducator substitutes.

Impact: This would improve recruiting and assignment of paraeducator substitutes.

Certified Contract

1. It is recommended the district consider a salary schedule for paraeducators that is multi-tiered and compensates individuals employed in challenging or skilled positions.

Impact: This would enhance retention of paraeducators, particularly in those hard to retain positions.

Professional Development Plan

1. It is recommended the district examine the professional development calendar for increased opportunities for special education staff. Current learning needs exist for strategies to use with severely disabled students, behavior interventions and collaboration opportunities with regular education teachers.

Impact: This would improve teaching and learning.

2. It is recommended the district examine support for all services offered on the continuum of services, specifically examining how to support co-teaching.

Impact: This would support continued efforts in school improvement for both general and special education services.

3. It is recommended the district create additional opportunities for special education Learning Coaches to train teachers.

Impact: This would create a superior training model, improve teacher performance and student outcomes.



4. It is recommended the district train themselves on special education processes (e.g., pre-referral activities, SIT, tiered interventions, identification).
Impact: This would increase knowledge of special education procedures, responsibilities and system functions.
5. It is recommended the district increase professional development for building administrators related to legal compliance, special education issues, and special education infrastructure.
Impact: This would increase special education compliance, district efficiency and decrease parent complaints.
6. It is recommended the district explore or clarify the availability of job-alikes for special education teachers.
Impact: This would allow modeling of best practices for peer special education teachers.
7. It is recommended the district continue or increase professional learning opportunities focused on pedagogy, IEP training and assistive technology from special education support staff.
Impact: This would improve instruction, teacher knowledge of assistive technology and improve teacher performance.
8. It is recommended the district examine paraeducator orientation for new paraeducators.
Impact: This would improve knowledge of job description and strengthen retention for new paraeducators.
9. It is recommended the district increase special education teacher awareness of their independent ability to develop targeted, individualized paraeducator training opportunities.
Impact: This would enhance specific employment skills for paraeducators.

Organizational Chart

1. It is recommended the district continue to monitor and evaluate the current administrative restructuring model created the summer of 2016.
Impact: This would determine effectiveness and efficiency of the restructuring model.
2. It is recommended the district increase special education administration involvement in district/building administration meetings.
Impact: This would improve communication, access and procedural knowledge.

Job Descriptions and Evaluation Instruments

1. It is recommended the district provide additional principal training to support the new evaluation model implemented for special education teachers.
Impact: This would increase principal understanding of the evaluation procedures for special education teachers.
2. It is recommended the district consider utilizing a data collection instrument to obtain building principal input for special education teacher evaluations and related service evaluations.
Impact: This would improve special education teacher evaluation data.

3. It is recommended the district clarify/develop job descriptions for new positions: special education learning coaches and facilitators.

Impact: This would clarify job responsibilities ensuring that employees are performing their job tasks as efficiently as possible. This would result in increased success rate for students.



Organization and Leadership

Findings

Board Communication

- Special Education administrators report low staff morale across the district.
- General education staff don't seem to have a sense of ownership of identified students.
- Special education administrators feel they are more reactive than proactive.
- Special Education director's list of job responsibilities prevents him from being able to devote adequate time to manage a complex special education department.
- Staff report having to spend a disproportionate amount of time on students with highly challenging/disruptive behaviors.
- Interrelated rooms are becoming increasingly becoming behavior rooms at the expense of students with learning needs.
- Staff report inadequate input from general education teachers as to present levels of performance in the general education classroom.
- Special education support staff provide observations and advice on best practices with inadequate follow through.
- The effectiveness of inclusionary practices is dependent on the culture of the building.
- Special education minutes as specified on the IEP are not being provided.
- Secondary principals report that interrelated services are only available 45 minutes every other day.
- Special education teachers report not having time to work with and plan for their students.
- Administration report fewer inclusionary opportunities for students of color.



COMMENDATIONS:

Board Communication

1. The district has a culture of being highly inclusive.
2. The special education department is widely respected both locally and regionally.
3. There is autonomy at the building level to meet student's needs as appropriate for the culture of the building.
4. Special education teachers are viewed as being extremely effective.
5. Elementary principals report good special education administrative support.
6. Secondary special education teachers feel that Lawrence is a really great district for special education students.
7. Administrative support is viewed as a plus in many areas.
8. There is good communication between the facilitators and coaches.
9. Parents interviewed report a high level of satisfaction with services provided.
10. Itinerant staff report improved direction from central administration via the school psychologists.
11. By report the greatest district strength is the quality of the special education staff.
12. The district leadership is to be highly commended for including the Special Education director in the superintendent's cabinet.

RECOMMENDATIONS / IMPACTS:

Board Communication

1. It is recommended the special education staff be surveyed to help determine the cause of the perceived low morale.
Impact: This would enable district administration to develop a plan to remedy the low morale.
2. It is recommended the Administration work with building principals to increase ownership of identified students as part of the building culture.
Impact: This increased sense of ownership would allow for a more seamless delivery of services and enhance efforts to support inclusionary practices.
3. It is recommended the district have the special education administrators at all levels devote more time to building visits in an effort to intervene proactively before problems intensify.
Impact: This would help ameliorate the sense of being reactive.



4. It is recommended the district prioritize the Special Education Director's job responsibilities to determine which ones can be assumed by other administrative staff.
Impact: This would allow the director to devote more effort in the management of the special education program.
5. It is recommended the district increase the special education program efforts to acquaint all district staff with the available placement options.
Impact: This would enhance staff's ability to accommodate the needs of highly aggressive/disruptive students while minimizing the effect on the learning climate.
6. It is recommended the district behavior specialists align interventions with the building resources available to the student(s).
Impact: Interventions that are sustainable in the absence of the behavior specialists would have a greater chance of achieving long term impact.
7. It is recommended the district review the service delivery model with an eye to utilizing all resources available in maintaining highly disruptive students in their neighborhood school.
Impact: This would maximize the resources available to address severe needs, building staff would have additional options at their disposal.
8. It is recommended the district encourage general education teachers to attend IEP meetings or provide descriptive written feedback to identify the student's present levels of performance within the general education environment.
Impact: This would allow special education staff to more closely target areas of need outlined in the IEP.
9. It is recommended the district direct the special education support staff, after providing observations and advice on best practices, make time available for follow up visits to determine the efficacy of their suggested interventions.
Impact: This would result in a greater sense of support from those implementing the proposed interventions and allow for fine-tuning of those interventions.
10. It is recommended the district have the upper level general and special education administrators work with building principals to ensure the inclusionary culture is equal and present.
Impact: This would result in a more seamless delivery of service to identified students.
11. It is recommended the district review the service delivery model to identify and remove the impediments to providing the services as indicated on the IEP.
Impact: Providing the services agreed upon in the IEP would improve the learning opportunities for the students served as well as insure the district is in compliance with IDEA requirements.
12. It is recommended the district review the current schedule of special education services for adequacy and consistency with the requirement of the IDEA.
Impact: This would result in increased access to special education services for students who require a higher level of support than the current forty-five minutes allows.



13. It is recommended the district review current special education practices to determine what factors are preventing special education teachers from having the time to work with and plan for their students.

Impact: This would enhance the learning opportunities for the students served.

14. It is recommended the district identify and remove the factors impeding the inclusionary opportunities for students of color.

Impact: This would allow for greater efficacy in the provision of services for those students as well as insuring compliance with the mandates of the Office of Civil Rights (OCR).





School Profile Information

Lawrence Special Education #497

2014-2015 ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS*

Lawrence Special Education, Peer Organizations, State

DISTRICT		Economically Disadvantaged Percent
Lawrence Special Education		39.30
Peer Organizations	Salina #305 <i>Average</i>	46.20
	Paola Coop #368 <i>Average</i>	52.24
	Geary #475 <i>Total</i>	60.79
	Butler Cnty Interlocal #490 <i>Average</i>	38.88
	Topeka #501 <i>Total</i>	76.68
	SouthWest KS Coop #613 <i>Average</i>	53.23
	Sedgwick Coop #618 <i>Average</i>	34.78
	SEK Interlocal #637 <i>Average</i>	60.60
State Average		49.97

* **Source:** www.ksde.org

HEADCOUNT ENROLLMENT*

Lawrence, Peer Organizations, State

DISTRICT		2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Lawrence #497		12,106	11,840	11,941
Peer Organizations	Salina Coop #305	14,191	14,357	14,301
	Paola Coop #368	8,362	8,495	8,503
	Geary #475	7,809	8,332	8,156
	Butler Cnty Interlocal #490	17,986	18,906	20,105
	Topeka #501	14,169	14,051	14,095
	SouthWest KS Coop #613	11,116	11,202	11,082
	Sedgwick Coop #618	20,860	20,814	20,618
	SEK Interlocal #637	12,615	12,784	12,806
State Totals		491,577	492,905	492,301

* **Source:** www.ksde.org

2014-2015 STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES*

Lawrence Special Education, Peer Organizations, State

DISTRICT		Total Students with Disabilities	Percent of Students with Disabilities
Lawrence Special Education		1,504	12.70
Peer Organizations	Salina #305	2,372	16.52
	Paola #368	1,435	16.82
	Geary #475	1,330	15.96
	Butler Cnty Interlocal #490	2,244	11.87
	Topeka #501	2,608	18.56
	SouthWest KS Coop #613	1,395	12.45
	Sedgwick Coop #618	2,737	13.15
	SEK Interlocal #637	1,962	15.35

* Source: KSDE

2014-15 SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS*

Lawrence Special Education, Peer Organizations, State

DISTRICT		Total Special Education Teachers	Total Students per Special Education Teacher	Disabled Students per Special Education Teacher
Lawrence Special Education		219	54.1	6.9
Peer Organizations	Salina # 305	128	112.2	18.5
	Paola #368	130	65.3	11
	Geary #475	155	53.8	8.6
	Butler County Interlocal #490	212	85	10.6
	Topeka #501	306	46	8.5
	SouthWest KS Coop #613	139	80.6	10
	Sedgwick Coop #618	313	66.5	8.7
	SEK Interlocal #637	169	75.6	11.6
State Totals		3927.5	125.5	17.8

* Source: KSDE

2015 SPECIAL EDUCATION PARAEDUCATORS*

Lawrence Special Education, Peer Organizations, State

DISTRICT		Total Paraeducators	Total Students per Paraeducator	Disabled Students per Paraeducator
Lawrence Special Education		302	39.2	5
Peer Organizations	Salina #305	428	33.5	5.5
	Paola #368	243	35	5.9
	Geary #475	276	30.2	4.8
	Butler County Interlocal #490	450	40	5
	Topeka #501	384	36.6	6.8
	SouthWest KS Coop #613	281	39.9	9.5
	Sedgwick Coop #618	596	35	4.6
	SEK Interlocal #637	446	28.7	4.4
State Totals		6162	80	11.3

* Source: KSDE

2014-2015 SPECIAL EDUCATION PREVALENCE BY EXCEPTIONALITY*

Lawrence Special Education, Peer Organizations, State

DISTRICT		AM%	DB%	DD%	ED%	HI%	LD%	ID
Lawrence Special Education		1.55	<	1.71	.96	<	4.96	.55
Peer Organizations	Salina #305	.95	0	1.22	<	<	7.58	.74
	Paola #368	1.08	<	3.35	<	<	4.75	1.47
	Geary #475	4.59	0	2.83	.45	.14	4.58	.65
	Butler Cnty Interlocal #490	.76	<	3.48	.40	<	5.37	.86
	Topeka #501	.82	<	3.65	1.67	.11	5.89	.93
	SouthWest KS Coop #613	<	0	5.35	<	<	5.35	<
	Sedgwick Coop #618	.80	<	1.95	.49	<	5.85	.66
	SEK Interlocal #637	1.06	<	3.66	1.07	<	5.88	.77

DISTRICT		OH%	OI%	SL%	MD%	TB%	VI%	DIS%
Lawrence Special Education		1.78	.09	1.92	.12	<	<	13.80
Peer Organizations	Salina #305	1.97	<	4.00	<	0	<	18.35
	Paola #368	2.12	<	4.99	<	<	<	17.27
	Geary #475	2.05	<	2.92	<	<	<	15.34
	Butler Cnty Interlocal #490	2.98	<	3.36	<	<	<	16.42
	Topeka #501	2.39	.08	1.60	.09	<	<	17.31
	SouthWest KS Coop #613	3.45	<	3.22	<	<	<	15.64
	Sedgwick Coop #618	1.93	<	2.89	.23	<	<	14.26
	SEK Interlocal #637	2.62	<	2.76	<	<	<	16.37

* Source: KSDE

LEGEND			
AM	Autism	HI	Hearing Impairments
DB	Deaf-Blindness	LD	Learning Disabilities
DD	Developmentally Delayed	ID	Intellectually Disabled
ED	Emotional Disturbance	OH	Other Health Impairments

LEGEND			
OI	Orthopedic Impairments	VI	Visual Impairments
SL	Speech / Language	DIS	Total Disabled
MD	Multiple Disabilities	<	Less than 10 students
TB	Traumatic Brain Injury		