

Board Report, October 2024

Lori Avart, Special Education Coordinator

What's New:

This summer I attended a training to be able to provide Ukeru training to staff in the district. Allisa List at our Pre-K was already trained. We trained the pre-K staff prior to the start of the school year and got some good feedback from those staff members. Since then, I have worked to train several staff members in our grade school who work with students who have been known to become aggressive at times. The staff have been wonderful and have shared that the training has really helped them be able to process student behavior in a different way and respond to them in ways that deescalate the situation and provide for positive support for them.

We will continue to share the training and provide trauma informed de-escalation training to other staff as the need is shown and the possibilities with time for professional development arise. .

Vision and Hearing Screenings:

School Sight and Sound, a company who contracts with schools to provide their mandated vision and hearing screenings, will be here in January and February to complete the screenings for our district. Tonya Harris, our school nurse, has the training and ability to screen individual students as needed during the year for concerns that arise, but having this company conduct all of the large group mandated screenings has been a huge benefit. The screening dates are below:

Elem – HS: **Initial Screen:** Thursday, January 9th
Re-screen: Wednesday, January 22nd
PK: **Initial Screen:** Thursday, February 6th
Re-screen: Wednesday, February 19th

Special Education Office News:

The Illinois State Board of Education has completed its annual Local Educational Agency (LEA) Determination review of Illinois School districts. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 616, requires all states to make determinations about the performance of their local districts regarding the provision of special education and related services to students with disabilities. Based on this annual review, ISBE determined that our district meets requirements based on multiple data points with no findings of noncompliance. The report from ISBE is attached.

[Illinois Special Education Accountability and Support System LEA Determination Matrix](#)

Staffing:

Finding quality special education teachers has not been an easy task in the last several years, and we have been lucky to recruit the level of the few Learning Behavior Specialists we have hired the last several years. Our teachers have continued to work hard to do more with fewer of them. Our special education teachers/case managers are expected to meet the needs of various levels of students in various subjects and grade levels while working with students who have the greatest learning challenges.

Prior to COVID, as a district, we had determined that the addition of a part time Student Services Specialist might support the special education teachers through the special education office by providing assistance with data collection for academics and behaviors, putting systems in place and helping troubleshoot situations that come up. Due to the shortages of candidates and the need to keep teachers in classrooms as we have been losing special educators and trying to keep up the high level of service, we were only able to have someone fill that part time position for about a semester. This is an idea I would like to revisit and put effort towards filling. I am finding it increasingly difficult to be in meetings, and complete all the facets of my position while also supporting the hardworking and dedicated teachers both special education and general education that are providing services to our students with disabilities. I have attached the job duties that we had previously felt a position like this could provide. I'd like to work towards finding a quality candidate that could be a good fit for such a position while maintaining and growing the level of specialized instruction happening in our classrooms.

[Student Services Specialist](#)