



UNITED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT INFORMATIONAL ITEM

TOPIC: United States Department of Education Monitoring Visit

SUBMITTED BY: David H. Gonzalez, Associate Superintendent

OF: Curriculum & Instruction Department

APPROVED FOR TRANSMITTAL TO SCHOOL BOARD: _____

DATE ASSIGNED FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION: March 22, 2017

INFORMATIONAL REPORT:

On February 27, 2017, the United States Department of Education visited United Independent School District to conduct an on-site monitoring visit. UISD along with 11 other districts across Texas were visited during the week of February 27, 2017. The objective of the visits is to ensure that the state of Texas is carrying out its general supervisory responsibility under IDEA.



UNITED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Cynthia M. Ramirez

Executive Director for Special Education

On February 27th, the United States Department of Education visited two UISD campuses as part of a statewide Monitoring Visit. Those two campuses were Los Obispos Middle School, Principal Jessica Salazar, and Newman Elementary School, Principal Leticia Garcia.

Purpose: The USDE Statement reads in part - “The U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (or OSERS), is concerned about the significant decline in the State’s identification rate for students with disabilities...Specifically, OSERS will examine whether the use of Indicator 10 in TEA’s Performance Based Monitoring Analysis System (PBMAS) has resulted in local education agencies (LEA’s) failure to identify, locate and evaluate all children suspected of having a disability.”

The USDE team’s official statement made it very clear from the onset that they were NOT here to monitor UISD or any Texas district and stated it “will not be making district level findings or requiring districts to take corrective action. However, TEA may be required to follow up with districts as appropriate.”

Findings: OSERS has stated that they will issue a Monitoring report approximately 90 days after the conclusion of the visits. Any findings and/or required corrective actions will be directed solely to TEA.

USDE Team:

- Rebecca Walawender, Deputy Director, OSERS Monitoring & State Improvement Planning
- Jennifer Finch
- Kimberly Mitchell

TEA IDEA Support Representative: Tammy Pearcy

UISD Monitoring Visit Structure & Summary:

- Three consecutive 45-minute interviews were conducted at each campus.
- Two groups of teachers were interviewed at each campus. Each group was of a mix of General Education, Special Education, veteran and new teachers. Special Education Diagnosticians also participated.
- The third group interviewed was campus Administration.
- The Team’s primary focus was on the pre-referral process to Special Education, such as the RTI (Response to Intervention) and Section 504 programs.
- General reactions from teachers, administrators and staff interviewed were positive. Participants indicated to us that they were confident in their knowledge and implementation of such requirements and procedures.
- At the end of the campus visits, the USDE Team met and interviewed District Level Administration.
- The USDE Team stated to Administration that their staff’s interviews were “Excellent,” and that teachers and staff were knowledgeable about their obligation to locate, identify and service students with a suspected disability.
- At the end of the District interview, Deputy Director Walawender publically stated that she would be quite secure in having her own children attend UISD schools.