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## **Exceptional Learning Solutions Summary of the Special Education District of Lake County Review and Next Steps**

August, 2024

Dr. Bambi Lockman and Todd Zoellick, consultants from Exceptional Learning Solutions (ELS) presented an update at the July 25th SEDOL Executive Board Meeting. ELS continues to monitor progress on the review recommendations after the extensive SEDOL Special Education Program Review was completed in July, 2023. The purpose of this virtual presentation was intended to provide an update for the Executive Board and highlight areas that require additional focus.

The consultants reported on each of the following 12 categories identified in the review, acknowledging progress and efforts of the committees and teams and the current status. The consultants acknowledged much great work and progress noted over the past year and shared what has gone well, some challenges along the way and areas of continued focus. The recommendations are part of a multi-year plan, with the majority indicating that they are in progress, several completed and a few highlighted as priorities for 2024-2025.

### **1. Central Office Administration**

- 1.1 A working group of SEDOL team members of central office, SEDOL programs, itinerants and members districts meet regularly and prioritize recommendations - **Partially complete**
- 1.2 A SEDOL organizational chart was developed by ELS and approved - **Partially complete**
- 1.3 A focus on school-based SEDOL program leadership with decision-making and budgeting aligned to school needs - **Incomplete**
- 1.4 Address culture and climate at SEDOL with an emphasis on why and how, provide transparency in initiatives, increase engagement and accountability - **Incomplete**
- 1.5 A developed communication plan with a series of different meeting and sessions to discuss initiatives, communicate updates and provide important information to stakeholder groups and share ideas, engage in discussions and develop processes and systems - **In Progress**
- 1.6 Purchase and implementation of a new SIS system and align AT under the Innovation and Technology Department - **In Progress**

### **2: Safety and Security**

- 2.1 A director of Safety has been hired that focuses on student and building safety, associated training and development of SEDOL wide safety plans - **Complete**
- 2.2 Each building has been evaluated by the Safety Director to identify areas of need and to ensure safety across SEDOL buildings - **Completed and Ongoing**

2.3 Development of a SEDOL safety plan is in the works that reflect the needs of students in the event of an emergency situation - **In Progress**

### **3: Human Resources**

3.1 New HR processes and procedures have been implemented that emphasize positive, efficient and effective recruitment and hiring practices - **Partially Complete**

3.2 Job descriptions have been revised, reflecting a more detailed, current description of positions, expanded outreach and mentoring opportunities - **Partially Complete**

3.3 Focus on design of a new staffing model that reflects the uniqueness of student population and is aligned to the instructional design of programs **Incomplete - focus for 2024-2025**

3.4 Ensure the paraprofessional role is clearly described during interviews and associated training to further understanding the role and encourage greater staff retention - **Partially complete**

### **4: Programming Offerings and Continuum of Services**

4.1 Development of a student instructional model and framework that reflects continuum of services - **Incomplete**

### **5: Curriculum and Instruction**

5.1 Create curriculum frameworks, with defined objectives and benchmarks, associated strategies and trainings - **In Progress**

5.2 Develop curriculum frameworks through curriculum committees for each program and associated trainings - **In Progress**

5.3 Review of instructional practices across practices, identify growth areas and associated PD - **Incomplete**

### **6: Assessment and Data**

6.1 Provide staff with ongoing PD on data collection, analysis and utilization of data in instructional settings as well as trend data in student records and decision-making - **In Progress**

6.2 Assessment administration across the school year - **In Progress**

6.3 Share assessment data with staff and leaders and associated training to interpret results to inform instruction - **In Progress**

6.4 Development of a SEDOL-wide data policy to standardize data collection, details on potential uses and storage - **Incomplete**

### **7: Behavioral Systems**

7.1 Crisis response team development across each SEDOL program and increased and sustained training for behavioral interventions - **In Progress**

7.2 Behavior specialists allocated across SEDOL programs - **In Progress**

### **8: Training and Professional Development**

8.1 Design and implementation of professional development plan that focuses on priority areas of Instructional Practices, IEP development, Data collection, Paraprofessional and safety training - **In Progress**

8.2 Professional Development focus through Hiring or focus on development of a PD plan and associated coordination - **Incomplete**

8.3 Dedicated Paraprofessional coaching for each SEDOL program - **In Progress**

## **9: Policies and Procedures**

9.1-1 Development of IEP processes and procedures, roles, associated criteria and training for procedures and timelines - **In Progress**

9.1B Establishment of expectations , parent and staff communication, records processes, data collection and IEP processes and monitoring - **In Progress**

9.1C Placement determination through the IEP process - **In Progress**

9.2 Development of a Parent Handbook that includes program description, school opportunities and instructional practices - **In Progress**

## **10: Finance and Budgets**

10.1 Meetings to transition budgeting and reporting processes - **Incomplete**

10.2 Consider a grant writer for research on applicable grant - **Completed**

10.3 Development of a committee and process of SEDOL and District leaders to evaluate services, value and associated costs - **Incomplete**

**Priority for Interim Superintendents**

## **11: Parents and Community Relations**

Development of a consistent SEDOL brand, parent handbook and updated website with current and effective external and internal information - **In Progress**

## **12: Member Districts**

Design programs and services collaboratively between SEDOL and Member Districts and implementation with fidelity that reflect a high quality service to students across SEDOL community - **Incomplete**

**Priority for Interim Superintendents**

## **Next Steps:**

This important summary serves as a springboard for our collective focus at SEDOL this year. Through collaborative efforts with various stakeholder groups, we are working on prioritizing several main areas of focus through the development of a SEDOL Continuous Improvement Plan that we will bring to the SEDOL Executive Board for approval on August 22nd. This plan will highlight goals, action steps and identified indicators of completion. Throughout the year, presentations to the respective SEDOL Boards, meetings with district superintendents and special education directors, SEDOL Foundation and other stakeholders will include updates referencing the designated CIP goal and aligned to one of the ELS review categories.

Progress updates will be communicated to both the SEDOL Executive Board and Governing Board, member districts and other SEDOL stakeholder groups. During this important year of transition, SEDOL will continue to consult with ELS as we build systems and processes to advance the work, focus on the most important priorities and establish systems and processes that will continue to build bridges for a brighter future.