

Reach Academy for Girls Special Education Plan

This overview is designed to explain Reach Academy for Girls' plan to increase special education students' test scores, self-esteem and coping skills as it relates to the CCSS and special education. The 2013–2014 DCAS scores indicate overall performance of our Special Education students was lackluster to say the least. However, the positive evidence found after analyzing growth targets was that 63% of the SPED students last year hit their growth target in either Reading or Math. Presently, students at Reach Academy for Girls are referred to special education after they have moved through the RTI process. At Reach Academy for Girls, special education students automatically move to Tier 3 and receive intervention services as well as the supports reflected in their individualized education plan. The following are additional measures we are taking to ensure our special education population will achieve academic success.

1. Supporting the Special Education Population

Through restructuring, we will strengthen the way our school approaches educating students with disabilities. Our goal is that all students with disabilities will be:

- Held to high academic standards
- Taught in the same class as students without disabilities as much as possible or (placed in the “least restrictive environment” that is academically appropriate)
- Provided with both RTI and special education services as appropriate for their needs
- Presented with coping strategies through “Behavioral Interventions and Responsive Classroom practices that will build self-assurance
- Taught at their instructional levels as well as grade level

An example of the high standards, to which our special education students will be held include procurement of common core, aligned teaching materials for special education students as well as special education teacher training. In addition, we will meet with each of the special education students and their parents in order to share our expectation for their child's achievement. This will include;

- Establishing an ambitious academic goal for which our students will be held accountable, looking beyond traditional expectations of special education students and instead benchmark students' learning against the achievement of students in the most successful classrooms.
- Investing students in achieving ambitious academic goals, and convincing students that those big goals are possible. This will permit students to work harder and achieve more, simply because they believe they can and are expected to.
- Working purposefully and relentlessly to achieve their goal overcoming each obstacle.
- Deliberately and continually improving performance over time through a constant process of self-evaluation and learning. As part of the special education teachers' ongoing reflection process, she will work to document and track positive student interactions through the use of responsive classroom and PBS techniques. Classroom DOJO (on-line classroom reward system in which parents have constant access) and classroom meetings will be an integral part of this process.

2. RTI, Summer Support, and Team Approach

In order to ensure that all special education students are educated in an environment that is academically appropriate and rigorous, grade level teams will work to develop services and supports that maximize opportunities for student success. This means that a student might have different special education services during different parts of the day in addition to RTI. For example, if a student needs more support in reading, she will work directly with a special education teacher to develop her reading skills, as well as the RTI specialist. Her special education teacher will work with the math teacher to help support her Math needs. This program of services and supports would be accurately reflected in her individualized education plan (or IEP) as well as in her RTI folder.

The realization that our girls were less than enthusiastic about test taking, coupled with the departure of their teacher in the early spring, prompted our implementation of a summer, web – based remediation program for our special education and at risk students. TenMarks is a web – based mathematics remediation program. This program afforded students the opportunity to maintain and acquire additional needed skills over the summer. Furthermore, these special education students were monitored by the special education teacher throughout the summer and received small group or one on one instruction once a week throughout June and July. This program will continue in subsequent years. Early morning tutoring for at risk students will also begin in November, 2014.

We believe that a team approach is the most successful way to support our special education students, so in September we formed a collaborative team to assist our RTI and special education students. This team consists of special and general education teachers as well as our interventionists and building administrators. Our team will complete detailed item analysis to identify trends and individual student needs. Using this data, differentiated lessons will be planned, shared and implemented. Instruction will be adjusted as indicated during faculty and school-wide professional development meetings, and the special education team will share information acquired at the DOE trainings. Finally, this team will travel to model schools to see exemplary practices aligned to meet student needs and attend professional development sessions including but not limited to:

- How to Write Standards Based IEPs
- Secondary Transition
- Behavior IEP Goals
- Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM).

3. Additional Resources

- **Goalbook Pathways**– This program provides educators with measurable learning objectives around the Common Core and ensures lessons are planned to the correct level of rigor. Learning objectives are scaffolded to promote DOK

levels 3 and 4 (Strategic and Extended Thinking). Goalbook Pathways also provides examples of differentiated instructional activities (Tiers 1–3). We also use this program to plan and implement IEPs.

- **SIPPS Reading and Focus Math**– SIPPS Reading and Focus Math are both aligned to the CCSS. These two programs are highly regarded resources for special education students. The focus of SIPPS is to provide special education students with a systematic approach to reading comprehension, fluency and decoding. Focus Math allows students to use products that assist in constructing meaning by connecting prior knowledge to information. When they read a story problem, they generate questions about the text to clarify meaning before working the problem and then after to check for reasonableness of their answers. This program also affords students opportunities to engage in highly interesting hands on problems while practicing needed skills.

